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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS WITH A PROGRAM
DESIGNED FOR ITS UNDERSTANDING AND
IMPLEMENTATION BY A LOCAL
CONGREGATION

by

Lester Levi Bennett

Chairperson: Arnold Kurtz

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project

Andrews University

Department of Church and Ministry

Title: A STUDY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS WITH A PROGRAM
DESIGNED FOR ITS UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTA-
TION BY A LOCAL CONGREGATION

Name of researcher: Lester Levi Bennett

Name and title of faculty adviser: Arnold Kurtz

Date completed: June 1979

Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination sees itself as under mandate to present and demonstrate to the world a special message. This mission has been taken as the challenge to "finish the work." In the New Testament, the church in ministry is often presented in terms of the operation of spiritual gifts by which the Holy Spirit equips the individual member for a unique work. Yet Seventh-day Adventists have, for the most

part, given very little attention to this subject except for an emphasis on the gift of prophecy. Would a more comprehensive presentation of this doctrine for purposes of its understanding and utilization lead to a greater interest and dedication for Christian service within the membership?

Method

Three steps were utilized in the project: (1) a Biblical study of the subject of spiritual gifts was undertaken, supplemented by the investigation of recent literature on the topic; (2) this material was translated into various pastoral assignments, by means of which the Adventist congregation at Galt, California, was introduced to concepts and operations that utilized the doctrine of spiritual gifts; and (3) an endeavor was made to understand the church members' response to the programs and to evaluate their perception of its impact.

Results

The project demonstrated that by the vehicle of the pastor's regular channels of communication, the target congregation developed a wide awareness of the teachings inherent in the doctrine of "gifts." Members perceived a number of ways in which they and others were positively affected in life and experience. New concepts of member/body relationships were recognized by members of the church.

Conclusions

Basic conclusions arising out of the project were: (1) an emphasis on the reception of the spiritual gifts doctrine has practical value for Adventist teaching and its acceptance by church members leads to a renewed sense of loyalty to the body and dedication to its mission; (2) the setting of spiritual gifts within the body metaphor helps individual members discover that each has been given a unique ability for service in contrast to seeing oneself in terms of a mass stereotype; and (3) this spiritual-gifts emphasis is a useful complement to presentations and programs on church growth.

Andrews University
School of Graduate Studies

A STUDY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS WITH A PROGRAM
DESIGNED FOR ITS UNDERSTANDING AND
IMPLEMENTATION BY A LOCAL
CONGREGATION

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Lester Levi Bennett

June 1979

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July 3, 1979
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DEDICATION

To Leona who has been endowed by the Holy Spirit with the gift of being my loving wife, and since by the operation of that gift has encouraged me to undertake and fulfill this endeavor, supported its development by enduring the inconvenience and expense it has entailed, and shared invaluable counsel along the way, in deep appreciation I dedicate this project report.

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PREFACE

The last twenty years (1958-1978) have seen a growing interest in the subject of spiritual gifts. Before that, discussions on the subject tended to be concerned only with the first century or were limited to the Pentecostal movement.

Then came the breaking out of glossolalia from a sectarian setting to mainline denominations, including such groups as Episcopalian, Lutheran, Congregational, and even Roman Catholic. Spiritual gifts became popularized over night. Neo-Pentecostalism was no longer just an interesting phenomenon but had become a major force in current Christian thinking.

As a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, my work had been relatively untouched by the charismatic movement. I read an occasional article about the movement and added a couple of books on the subject to my library. Sometimes a church member asked me a question relating to it, usually one having to do with tongues. My answers were pat and shallow. The questioner was satisfied--I think.

When the term "spiritual gifts" came up in conversation within Adventist circles, the accepted

definition was limited to the gift of the spirit of prophecy. In recent studies on the subject, a search of indices to Adventist publications has confirmed the general use of this limit.

About the time it became possible for me to enroll as a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Andrews University, I had begun to question the adequacy of this understanding. In my reading about church renewal and about the increased emphasis on lay ministry, I began to feel that as a pastor I was failing to utilize an important concept that was essential to the maturity of the members in my church.

Thus when the time came to finalize on a project topic for the degree requirements, "spiritual gifts" came naturally at the top of the list. Here would be an opportunity to do an extended study on the subject. In addition, I would have support and guidance in evaluating my conclusions and in applying them to a congregation.

By this time my preliminary investigations had suggested that the doctrine of spiritual gifts had indeed much more depth than I had seen before. It also seemed that this more adequate definition was vital to establish a proper model on which to plan the work of the local church body. In conversations with other pastors, I met some of the same questions that I had

been asking. But there were very few answers. When I mentioned my interest in spiritual gifts as a project, my pastor friends would almost always respond, "Let me know what you discover." This indicated that the project would be of value to others as well as myself. Now I knew what the subject of my project would be and I prepared a proposal to cover it.

Seeking a Theological Base

The development of the project required two phases. The first task required a study to seek a Biblical structure for understanding the doctrine of spiritual gifts. The goal here was not concerned with the details of such questions as the tongues experience or the spirit of prophecy. It was, instead, a search for a broad base on which the interpretation of any spiritual gift might rest.

This underlayment soon proved to be closely tied with the New Testament "body" metaphor concept of church. The resulting theological statement focuses primarily on the common ground where the two routes of "church as body" and "spiritual gifts" intersect. The conclusions of this first phase constitute part one of this report.

The first chapter of this section should not be seen as a diversion from this focus. It is, rather, to be understood as foundational. It is my contention that

the study of spiritual gifts must be done in constant awareness of the immediacy of the Holy Spirit to this subject. To provide this base, the content of the first chapter has its relevance.

The other chapters of part one present various aspects of the concept of "gifts" as they relate to the church under the body structure. But since metaphors are limited in their application, it was found necessary to support it with additional New Testament figures.

A serious attempt has been made to structure conclusions in the New Testament teaching. This includes a conscious effort to observe accepted principles of hermeneutics. So the primary source for the material developed has been the Bible. The Revised Standard Version serves as the basic English translation. When others are used, the source will be noted.

Statements of Ellen White, while recognized as authoritative in the Seventh-day Adventist fellowship, have been used mainly for their illustrative rather than doctrinal value.

Seeking an awareness of some of the current literature on "gifts" has been an important part of this study. The material has been reviewed to see how others

have handled the "gift" questions. Some of those major agreements and disagreements to the position of this paper will be noted.

Application of the Concept

Beyond the effort to understand and assemble a Biblical concept comes another task for the pastor. That task is the attempt to share the concept in appropriate and useful ways with his congregation. Part two of this report will relate to this phase of the project.

The congregation is seen as a dynamic organism. Application of truth to lives is not so simple an operation--like painting a wall. Individual personalities have to be recognized and respected. Backgrounds and prejudices are always a part of a hidden agenda, whether the pastor is aware of them or not. Varied positions of members on the scale of maturity in Biblical understanding have to be kept in mind as additional teachings are presented.

Nor is the pastor's action itself a clear and stable factor. For he too is subjective. What are his motivations for wanting to present this particular topic? Is he on an ego trip? Is this subject just a hobby? Is he confident that what he sees as important is indeed the Lord's message to his people? And even if it is, is this the right time for it to be present truth?

As the pastor involved in this particular study, I have struggled with these questions. I am satisfied that bringing an extended presentation on spiritual gifts to my congregation at Galt, California, was a legitimate aspect of my pastoral service and not just an academic exercise. Others with whom I have counseled confirmed this view. In other words, I was given the green light.

Some Concerns on the Project

Several concerns about openness between myself and my congregation became important as methodology was investigated and planned for this phase of the D.Min. project.

1. The congregation should be aware that an academic involvement on my behalf was part of the program.
2. The congregation should be assured that this academic aspect was fully secondary to the goal of my spiritual service as their pastor.
3. The congregation should feel that their relation to the project was free and open and that in no sense would I attempt to manipulate them for personal advantage.
4. The congregation should be informed that the project carried the sanction of the local conference administration.

5. As far as possible, the program should be conducted within the normal routine of the pastor's function.

6. It seemed important that the presentation of spiritual gifts should be kept in balance. While it would be a special emphasis for a one-year period, it must not be the only topic heard during that time. Other concerns and church calendar items must not be sacrificed.

7. A Biblical concept should not be valued for its intellectual orthodoxy alone but essentially for its function and application. So there must be an endeavor to integrate the understanding of spiritual gifts into the life and operation of the congregation.

8. Finally, the congregation should have the freedom to reject any part of the presentation that they felt to be untrue to the revealed Word of God. The priesthood of all believers should always be allowed to stand as a challenge to a pastor's message. My people were to be under no obligation to accept any part of my project merely out of loyalty to me. They should be assured of my love and my support at any point where they might consciously disagree with me.

My Relationship with the Galt Church

I began service as the pastor of the Galt church in the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day

Adventists in January 1975. Within the conference, the church has the reputation of being a good church to pastor. Only four pastors had filled the twenty-eight-year period prior to my arrival. This seven-year average tenure is probably one of the highest in the conference.

The membership is conservative--perhaps reflecting the small-town, rural location. Yet at the same time the group is open to new ideas and programs. They are loyal to the denomination in doctrine and policy. In financial goals they often rank near the top of the conference listings in per capita response. This is not because of greater wealth but because of consistent systematic giving.

My style of pastoral leadership expects a high degree of responsibility and authority from lay officers. The Galt church quickly accepted this concept of church management when I began work there. During the first two years I was with the church, several physical improvements and equipment additions were made with no financial strain. Also during that period a new program which had been under discussion for many years--the plan to drop membership in a union elementary-school constituency and establish a local day school--was adopted. This was not without some tension, but the congregation very candidly aired the various views and moved ahead

with no serious divisions on the issue.

When the opportunity opened for me to enroll in Andrews University for the Doctor of Ministry program, I explored its implications with the members of the congregation. By this time we had become well acquainted and I felt fully accepted by the group. I believe they were comfortable with me. I detected no disagreement to my degree program. In fact, there was a high level of encouragement.

I began studies at Andrews University in the fall Intensive of 1976. During this and the other two short three-week Intensives, local church responsibilities were covered by lay leadership; guests speakers were invited for Sabbath services. For my four-month residence at Andrews, during the spring term of 1978, the conference provided intern coverage for the church by assigning Steve Chavez to the church. The church responded warmly to Steve and his wife, Linda.

This background has been reviewed that the reader may better visualize the setting for the reports of the various implementation procedures given in part two. I have appreciated the kind support given by the congregation in my project.

The Content of Part Two

The reader will find a change of style in the two sections of this paper, reflecting their different

natures. The theological format of part one is replaced by a more informal, descriptive report of the second part.

The purpose of the descriptive report will be to share with the reader just what was being attempted and how it was done. Hopefully, adequate detail has been included in this description to give the reader a clear picture of the implemental activities.

Because the report deals with my personal experience, it seemed appropriate to use the style of speaking in the first person. Since, along with the congregation, I am also a subject of this report, in the dual role of student and pastor, this change of style hopefully recognizes my part in the equation.

Chapters six to nine provide the report of what was done.¹ This includes some summaries and immediate conclusions along the way. Chapter ten attempts to deal specifically with the final evaluation of the project. In it I also share my rationale for supporting certain conclusions, admit to some frustrations, and suggest possible future opportunities for myself and others.

The appended materials at the end of this report are illustrative examples of how I presented some of the programs on spiritual gifts.

¹See Appendix A for time schedule.

And it is germane to this report to include in this preface a personal testimony that this study, and the opportunity to experience it with a congregation, has become an avenue for the Holy Spirit to bless my own life with a brighter vision of God's plan for me and a sense of spiritual growth.

The members of my project committee demonstrated a very personal Christian concern in assisting me in this program. Dr. Arnold Kurtz, as chairman, was most helpful in giving structural guidance in outlining and organizing the total project and in his willingness to answer innumerable questions on procedures. Dr. Fritz Guy was responsible for overseeing the development of the material in Part One. His is the gift of gentleness as he skillfully leads the student to the proper phrase or the better channel for a particular truth. My early exploration into the topic of gifts was nurtured by Dr. Don Jacobsen as he developed an environment of koinonia in his spring quarter class. My deep appreciation goes to each of these men.

I am indebted to the administrative officers of the Northern California Conference, both past and present, for their confidence in me and their willingness to make provision for me to be involved in the D.Min. program.

Without the willingness of my church family at

Galt to explore with me the practical experiences of spiritual gifts, the laboratory needs of this project would not have been met. Their spiritual gifts not only aided my learning but my growth as well. I appreciate their love.

PART ONE

A STUDY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS, WITH EMPHASIS
ON THEIR RELATION TO THE CHURCH BODY

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS DIVINE

INDWELLER

"He will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever. . . ; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you" (John 14:16, 17).¹

Spiritual gifts presuppose the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. But to stop with this presupposition is to leave indefinite a focus that needs to be sharp before the topic of "gifts" can be evaluated. Therefore, this first chapter will summarize the relationship in which the Holy Spirit is involved with the church member. That relationship provides the setting in which the doctrine of spiritual gifts is founded.

God as Gift

The understanding of this setting can well begin with the point that the Holy Spirit is Himself a gift (Acts 2:38). It is the nature of the Godhead that giving is first in person rather than in things. "God so loved . . . that He gave" (John 3:16). It is only after

¹Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the Revised Standard Version.

God's gift as self--Father, Son, or Holy Spirit--that Deity adds other gifts.

A caution must be used in speaking of the Holy Spirit as "gift." The expression cannot be taken in the sense of an ownership by the recipient. The Spirit is not a thing to be used. Instead, He is a Person. He is to use us.¹ As He is a divine Person, a creature can never "have" the Holy Spirit and control Him. "Spirituality . . . is not a possession but a being possessed."²

Instead, the Spirit gives Himself as Person in the sense of being available, with power and wisdom, to serve the needs of the Christian whose gift He is. Like Christ, He is sovereign. But He volunteers to be the divine minister to humans in their need. This is a key concept essential to the later discussion of gifts in this paper.

The coming of the Holy Spirit to be with persons must be recognized as a part of the total program under which heaven operates for the work of restoration. There is a unity of purpose within the Godhead. The divine activities overlap and complement one another. Thus Jesus foretold that the Spirit was to carry on the

¹Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898), p. 672.

²Arnold B. Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 322.

work which He (Jesus) had begun during His earthly life. "He will not speak of Himself. . . . He shall glorify me" (John 16:13, 14, KJV). He is "Christ's representative but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof."¹

Divine Indwelling

The Holy Spirit, as a gift, is best understood in the intimate personness with which the New Testament describes the relationship. Since Christian spirituality is a being possessed, "it inevitably and always means being in relationship."² One of the Biblical passages where this is described most vividly is in Rom 8. The chapter speaks of victory over sin, blessings of sonship, and the assurance of victory that comes as the Spirit joins in union with the believer.³

This union is emphasized in the repetitions of vss. 9-11. Significant phrases include: "you are in the Spirit," "the Spirit of God really dwells in you," "have the Spirit of Christ," "Christ is in you," "the

¹White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

²Come, p. 322.

³"The most significant single chapter in the New Testament on the Holy Spirit is the eighth chapter of Romans. While the Holy Spirit is mentioned only once before in the Epistle, He is referred to nineteen times in this chapter." Ralph Earle, Word Meanings in the New Testament, Vol. 3 (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1974), p. 139.

Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you," and "his Spirit which dwells in you." In each case the closeness of the relationship is stressed.

In three of these expressions the term "dwells" is used. The noun form of the Greek word is oikos, meaning house. Here, as a verb, it is literally "housing" together.

This housing together is the basis of Paul's position here that the believer is now enabled to fulfill the requirements of the law (vs. 4) which before were impossible for him (vs. 7). Thus the Christian is logically in harmony with the Spirit's mind and there is "portrayed clearly the fact that victorious Christian living comes only from the indwelling power and presence of the Spirit of God."¹

This concept of a person being lived in by another being is quite foreign to modern thinking. However, it was well recognized in the first century as witnessed to by the frequent cases of demon possession mentioned in the gospels.² When Satan indwelt a person, it seems that the individual often lost his personhood and became a slave of Satan.³ This points up a contrast

¹ Earle, p. 139.

² See Matt 8:28; 17:15-18; Mark 7:26; Luke 4:33; 9:39.

³ "Satanic agencies were incorporated with men. The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place

to the Holy Spirit. God's possession is by invitation only. He comes as a gift. A gift is such only if it can be refused.

In His work in the life of the believer the Spirit does not force the mind against the human choice. In the Rom 8 passage noted above, the type of service that is supplied to the believer is suggested in vss. 26, 27. "The Spirit helps us in our weakness; . . . the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." The Spirit's help seems to be to bridge the chasm that separates man in his lostness and then to represent him in the divine element. But the Spirit does not take the whole responsibility for the communication. Man must pray. Paul is not teaching passivity.¹

The word translated "help" in the text is a double compound. It comes from sunantilambanomai. Martha used it in the Luke 10:40 request for her sister's help. It means literally, "together against (something) to take hold."²

of God, had become the habitations of demons. The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men, were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men." White, Desire of Ages, p. 36.

¹D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Romans: The Final Perseverance of the Saints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), p. 134.

²Kenneth S. Wuest. Wuest's Word Studies, 6 vols.

This "lifting together," by which the Spirit helps, is especially said to be involved in the matter of prayer. The Christian is not even able to pray properly on his own. But the other mind, helping him within, is the all-knowing Spirit, aware of both man's heart and God's will. So the Spirit interprets man's deep feelings of distress and helps man to communicate with heaven.¹

In Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, this indwelling of the Spirit in the human body uses the temple metaphor. "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God" (1 Cor 6:19). The word for temple, naos, refers to the shrine or sanctuary proper, rather than the temple precincts.² It suggests the very heart of God's dwelling place.

In the context of this expression, the reality and intimacy of the divine-human relationship is vividly portrayed. The setting is Paul's warning against immorality. Instead of a legal code here, Paul uses an analogy. An illicit relationship with a prostitute would present the two persons as one, he argues. But that would violate the oneness already present with the

(Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1973), 1:140.

¹For an exegesis of this point, see Lloyd-Jones, pp. 134-157.

²Leon Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1966) p. 69.

Spirit in the Christian's body. "The immoral man sins against his own body" (1 Cor 6:18). The Christian, then, has no right to be immoral because of this prior claim of the Spirit. "So glorify God in your body" (vs. 20). Thus the union of Spirit with man has an ethical dimension.

Paul writes even more plainly to the Thessalonians.

God's plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean cut with sexual immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect, and never regarding it as an instrument for self-gratification. . . . The calling of God is not to impurity but to the most thorough purity It is not for nothing that the Spirit God gives us is called the Holy Spirit. (1 Thess 4:3-8, Phillips)

Yet the casuistic demand is not the most important aspect of the life marked by a Spirit indwelling. His more significant service is that of enabler. This is one of the emphatic points of Rom 8. God's gift of His Son, from whose ministry the gift of the Holy Spirit comes, makes it possible that the "just requirements of the law might be fulfilled" in those who walk according to the Spirit rather than after the flesh (Rom 8:3, 4). This relationship is defined as one in which the believer's spirit is "alive because of righteousness" (vs 10). This enablement to obey God's law is in contrast to those with a fleshly mind focus. Such are pictured as in a state of hostility to God, with a mind that "does

not" and "cannot" submit to God's law (vs. 7).

Two significant aspects seem obvious in conclusion to the statement on the indwelling Spirit. A life lived in obedience to God's law is both the result of and the evidence for a life indwelt by the Holy Spirit. "So is the Holy Spirit [a witness] whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32). Since spiritual gifts operate only in those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, this point is important in the evaluation of claimants of "gifts." No genuine operation of a spiritual gift will serve in willful violation of God's law.

The understanding of the Spirit's indwelling has yet another facet. In another use of the temple metaphor in 1 Cor 3:16, Paul apparently sees the indwelling of the Spirit in a corporate sense of the church group as well as the individual. He uses the plural form of the second person pronoun to speak of "you" as the temple.¹ So the Spirit not only lives with persons. He chooses to dwell too in the larger body, which are the fellow Christians united together. Both of these indwellings have importance to this study.

Now the congregation, like the individual, must be living entirely in the Spirit. "The church is one because every member is possessed by the same

¹Morris, p. 69.

Spirit."¹ It is in this sense that a collection of people becomes a congregation, an organism.²

Nature of the Relationship

Any attempt to define too precisely the operation of the Spirit in humanity can easily exceed the limits of revelation.³ Yet one implied question about indwelling needs to be looked at here for it will surface again in the next chapter. The question is on the nature of the relationship between man and the indwelling God. It arises at the point of comparison to the incarnation of Christ.

Is the statement "The Word became flesh and dwelt us" (John 1:14) saying the same thing as our speaking of the Spirit dwelling in man? What does 2 Pet 1:4 mean by our being "partakers of the divine nature?"

A vital distinction must be kept in mind. Man, even with the indwelling Spirit, is still man. He is not God. But Christ was not only man partaking of the "same nature" (Heb 2:14), He was also "God" (John 1:1).

¹Come, p. 325.

²Walter J. Bartling, "The Congregation of Christ--A Charismatic Body," Concordia Theological Monthly 40 (February 1969):71.

³"It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is as the nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it because God has not revealed it to them." Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), pp. 51, 52.

We, through the Spirit's help, seek to become like Christ. But this is not "an extension of the incarnation" for that was "an unique event."¹

Christ, in coming as this unique "God-man," lived a holistic expression of the divine will. He was one with God even while identifying with humanity.

But the living of God within man is a gracious act to meet human need. Here the Spirit and the man are not one in the sense that God becomes absorbed in man and loses His identity as a person. That would be pantheism. Nor does the man cease to be a free moral being with the option of asserting his independence. This distinction needs to be kept clearly in mind with the realization that the divine Guest is never a prisoner nor a tyrant.²

One additional consideration of the indwelling Spirit's relationship to people needs to be recognized.

¹Eoin Barnard Giller, "Building Up the Body of Christ" (D. Min. dissertation, Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1977), p. 19.

²Some writers have not been correct in dealing with the term "incarnation." For example: The Spirit "indwells the believer as the animating Soul of his soul, Spirit of his spirit, repeating in himself the mystery of the union of the two natures in one personality. . . . Through this divine indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the continuation or perpetuation of the Incarnation is fulfilled." William Fitch, The Ministry of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), pp. 147, 148. See also Robert Johnson, The Church and Its Changing Ministry (Philadelphia: The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1961), p. 12.

That is the distinction between His work for the indwelt believer and the non-Christian.

This distinction may be illustrated by contrasting life with Life. The first, life, means only the biological existence which is a universal gift (Acts 17:25). But the other, Life, indicates that quality of being which the Bible terms everlasting and eternal in such texts as John 3:16 and 1 John 5:11, 12. Thus the unique result of the indwelling Spirit is to minister this Life in a direct experience to those who are in Christ. Life is different from life not only in quantity but especially in quality. Paul sees existence without Life as being dead.¹ So the Spirit serves to give "Life" to those in mortal bodies (Rom 8:11). He comes as a "regenerating agency."²

This function of the Holy Spirit is not usually in the physical sense, although that may occasionally occur as in the case of Samson's supernatural strength. The concern is more with man's consciousness, or perhaps better, his conscience. He deals with attitudes and insights.

A good example of this is in the presentation of

¹"To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life" (Rom 8:6). "You he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked" (Eph 2:1, 2).

²White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 52.

Rom 8 noted earlier. The contrast is between the fleshly mind and the spiritual mind. "Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5). The operation of the Spirit, then, not only makes possible a change of outlook in life; it performs an actual change in relationship. "It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom 8:16).

This same operation is explained in a different context to the Corinthian church. The Spirit is pictured as the divine Researcher, competent in the "depths of God" (1 Cor 2:10). These insights are shared by the Spirit to the spiritual man in a dimension of spiritual discernment which is impossible to the natural (psuchikos) man (1 Cor 2:12-16). Paul believed that however large a man's claim to knowledge might be, he is ignorant of spiritual things "unless he is under the teaching of the Holy Spirit."¹

In Ephesians the gift is called "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation" (Eph 1:17-20). He enables one to have "the eyes" of his heart "enlightened" (Eph. 1:18). At the last supper, Jesus promised that "when the Spirit

¹Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948), p. 485.

of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

It is this service of giving insight and discernment that also becomes important in the operation of spiritual gifts. It must be remembered that the function of the Spirit is a spiritual service. These insights must not be understood as making people "smart" but in making them "holy." They are provided, not to supplement human nature, but to transform it. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor 5:17).

Yet the impression must not be left that the sinful human, in his natural state, receives no spiritual benefit from the Holy Spirit. He is dependent upon the Spirit to initiate the move to God. It is this facet that Jesus recognized in the promise to the disciples. When the Holy Spirit comes, He said, "he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (John 16:8). If the person responds to that conviction and accepts Jesus, then the gift of the Spirit, as a divine companion, takes place. Thus, "through the agency of the Holy Spirit, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature."¹ But if man fails to respond, then the administration of Life never happens.

¹White, Desire of Ages, p. 675.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Attempts to understand the predictions of the coming of the Spirit have often led to controversy. Especially have the expressions about the "baptism of the Spirit" been sources of contention to Bible scholars.

Each of the gospels records the statement of John the Baptist to the effect that the coming One would baptize "with the Holy Spirit" (Matt 3:11).¹ Just before His ascension Jesus also reminded the disciples of the promise, "Before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). In vs. 8 He used a parallel term in the expression "has come upon you."

Peter saw in the experience of the 120 at Pentecost a fulfillment of this promise. But he saw even more. "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel," he says, and quotes the Old Testament prophet (Acts 2:16-21). Peter recognized the promise as being to others present who should "repent, and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). Later he saw in the experience with Cornelius its extension to the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-47).

An observation of the sequence is helpful here. The initial outpouring at Pentecost came upon the group whose Christian involvement dated back to the time when Jesus was present. The experience for them seemed to be the mark of a new era then beginning. Thus the

¹See also Mark 1:7, 8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33.

outpouring had no relation to the time of their conversion or baptism. But Peter's sermon stated that the new converts should expect the gift of the Spirit to follow repentance and baptism. However, in the case of Cornelius, the evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence preceded the baptism. These observations suggest that care must be taken in attempting to delimit too closely the exact point at which the Spirit is to manifest His presence. The Spirit is sovereign, Jesus inferred when He said, "The wind blows where it wills" (John 3:8).

Ideally, the time of one's baptism should also be the time for the "baptism of the Spirit." "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27). "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body," the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13, 27). Since the Spirit comes as the representative of Christ and indwells those who are in Christ, this conclusion seems appropriate. Thus water baptism should be evidence of a spiritual baptism. Actually, it is not always so. While the service of baptism is a sacred ordinance, it is administered by human hands. The Spirit is not to be forced. He moves when and where He wills.

Stagg would concur with this conclusion. "It is a gross injustice" to teach "baptismal regeneration or even that the Holy Spirit is given in baptism."¹ His

¹Frank Stagg, "The Holy Spirit in the New Testament," Review and Expositor 63 (Spring 1966):143.

concern is that men are not "spiritualized" in the baptistry but in Christ.

A common concern among those in the Pentecostal branches and others with a charismatic bent is the search for the "second experience." Their position is that after baptism and church membership, the Christian should seek for an additional event, commonly referred to as the "baptism of the Spirit" and usually marked by glossolalia.¹ The unfortunate result of this position is that there can easily come a great deal of tension in this "striving" for the expected experience and a sharp break between those who have arrived by having the experience and those who have not. In addition, the stress on the subjectivity and non-rationality often accompanying the tongues test jeopardizes the use of the mind as God's avenue of contact with a person.

Rather, the person's belief in Christ and dedication to Him seem the more appropriate point to anticipate the Spirit moving into the life. This is Herschel Hobbs' conclusion.

But in view of Jesus' word about the indwelling of Spirit (John 14:17) are we not justified in seeing the more normal coming of the Spirit into the heart the moment one becomes a believer as his being baptized in the sphere of the Holy Spirit?²

¹Typical of those presenting this position is Frand Boyd, The Spirit Works Today (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1970).

²Herschel H. Hobbs, The Holy Spirit: Believer's Guide (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967), p. 127.

The coming of the Spirit is not then to be sought for in a pattern of events but in a willingness to meet a condition. This seems to be the position of Ellen White. Here are some examples: If the promise "is appreciated as it should be," the fulfillment will be "seen as it might be."¹ "If all would be willing, all would be filled with the Spirit."² "The Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord."³

Another observation on Biblical phrasing is of interest here. It was noted above that each of the gospel records predicting the coming of the Spirit, as well as in Acts 1:4, 5, use the term "baptize." However, in the Acts 2 report of Pentecost, which seems to be unanimously recognized as the fulfillment of the predicted event, "baptize" is not used of the Spirit's arrival. Instead, the term is "filled." Later that day, Peter told the new converts that they may "receive" the Spirit, not "be baptized with" the Spirit. In the Cornelius story, the Holy Spirit "fell," He was "poured out," and they "received the Holy Spirit just as we have" (Acts 10:44-47). Of the disciples who Paul met

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 8:21.

²White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 50.

³Ibid., p. 49.

at Ephesus and who were rebaptized in the name of Jesus, it is said that the Holy Spirit "came" upon them (Acts 19:1-7). In fact, after Acts 1:5 the only possible New Testament reference to the Spirit baptism is 1 Cor 12:13. And that statement speaks of being put, or baptized into the body.

The significance of these observations is that care must be exercised in being too definitive in applying particular words to specific aspects of spiritual experiences. A logical conclusion here seems to be that a number of terms, including "the baptism of," "the filling" or "full of," and "received" can be used interchangeably to recognize the Spirit's entrance into the life of a Christian.

Neither should the baptism of the Spirit, as the infilling of an individual believer by the Holy Spirit, be thought of as a once-for-all event. It is, instead, an on-going experience. Here the Christian has the privilege of finding in the life of Christ a model of spiritual direction, for He was baptized daily.¹

A man is not filled with the Holy Spirit as a bowl is filled with a substance, the bowl then holding that content intact. The experience is better illustrated by a ship's sail, filled and empowered while,

¹Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1941), p. 139.

and only while, the wind is filling it in a continuous operation.

Two of the conclusions of this chapter bear repeating for they are basic to a proper doctrine of spiritual gifts. First, the Holy Spirit, as a member of the Godhead, is sovereign. He is not for purchase, as Peter pointed out to Simon (Acts 8:18, 19). He moves by His own omniscient will to represent and glorify Jesus Christ. The second is that while He moves over all men to woo them to Christ, He wills to function in partnership only in the person who has dedicated himself to that Christ.

This chapter has been set as a foundation from which to study further the Holy Spirit's work for believers, not only as individuals but also as the church body. It is this latter relationship which will now be noticed. For it is in that relationship that the subject of spiritual gifts is located.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

The first chapter has recognized that God works with each individual Christian by the indwelling of the Spirit. But God does not leave those being saved in isolation. That same Spirit brings these people together. "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body Now you are the body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:13, 27). In reality, these two operations of the Spirit, that is, indwelling the individual and putting him into the larger body, cannot be separated.

The "Christian comes into the body of Christ at the moment of his salvation."¹ The importance of this body relationship has been emphasized by stating that only those who are members of that body of Christ, where the Spirit dwells, can be possessed by the Spirit.² Schweizer holds that the church member is "fundamentally and primarily the body of Christ, and only in a secondary way" an individual member, for to begin one's thinking with the individual member handicaps an

¹John MacArthur, Jr., The Church, the Body of Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), p. 17.

²Come, p. 324.

understanding of Paul's concept of the church.¹ So then, those who are baptized into Christ, are baptized into the body of Christ.² This means union with Christ "by the Spirit and in the Spirit."³

Baptized into the Body

As there is one baptism, so there is one body (Eph 4:4, 5). The baptism of the Spirit represents His coming into the believer and putting that believer in Christ, that is, into His body. The New Testament holds an indissoluble unity of the Spirit and the church, the body. "Therefore the church cannot dispose of the Holy Spirit or of Christ and what He here does."⁴

The earlier reference to 1 Cor 12:13 noted Paul's statement of being "baptized" into one body. The verse enlarges the comment by an interesting mix of metaphors. He adds: "and were all made to drink of one Spirit." Paul used this same figure in 1 Cor 10:2, 4, where he refers to the people in the Exodus. He speaks of "drink" in the sense of a recognition that the ministry

¹Eduard Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1964), p. 63.

²G. R. Beasley-Murray, "The Holy Spirit, Baptism, and the Body of Christ," Review and Expositor 63 (Spring 1966):183.

³Ibid.

⁴Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 126.

of Christ was symbolized in the water from the rock. Perhaps he was reminded of John's report of Jesus' conversation at the time of the feast (John 7:37-39).¹ In each case the term "drinking" suggests that one is taking an essential substance into his being and is being sustained by it. So the Holy Spirit seeks "to animate and pervade the whole church"² which is His "court."³

In comparing the body, as church, here (1 Cor 12:27) with the body, as person, in chapter one, it is appropriate to mention the incarnation again. What does it mean that the church is Christ's body? This is best understood as speaking in metaphor. The figure is symbolic in the same way that the bread, at the last supper, is recognized when Christ said, "Take, eat; this is my body" (Matt 26:26).⁴

¹For a discussion on this point, see R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 516.

²White, Testimonies, 9:20.

³White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 12.

⁴Some would answer the question about Christ's body as church in more sacramental terms. "The body of Christ is Christ himself. . . . The church is Christ as he is present among us and meets us upon the earth after his resurrection." Anders Nygren, Christ and His Church (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 96.

"It is primarily in the Eucharist that this character of the 'body of Christ' is given to the church." Schweizer, p. 76.

This concept is challenged by seeing the body figure as a "covenantal representative" of Christ's death." Edmund P. Clowney, "Toward a Biblical Doctrine

However, it does seem that the incarnation of Christ makes the body metaphor appropriate for the New Testament teaching on church. While the term is metaphysical, it is related to a spiritual reality, recognized by Paul's frequent use of the phrase "in Christ." In this sense it has been referred to as an "incorporation" of the believer in Christ.¹ Another has suggested that to the extent that the church participates in the work of Christ, "ecclesiology becomes an aspect of christology."² The church serves as the "repository of the riches of the grace of Christ."³

Paul's Use of the Term "Body"

In 1 Cor 12 Paul gives an extended development of the body illustration. He notes that the body consists of a variety of members, some prominent, some weak, some with less honor. Yet all function together within a common bond by which they are defined as a body.

The discussion in the epistle up to chap. 12 has demonstrated one point. The church at Corinth had problems. These were demonstrated in such areas as marriage, lawsuits, morality, and diet. The illustration

of the Church," The Westminster Theological Journal 31 (November 1968):62.

¹William Robinson, Completing the Reformation (Lexington, Ky.: The College of the Bible, 1955), p. 40.

²Kraemer, p. 122.

³White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 9.

of the body had already been used as a corrective by showing that it is the medium by which man encounters God and his neighbors. "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. . . . So glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:19, 20). Now, in chap. 12, members of the church, as Christ's body, must also give the proper demonstration of how Christ would work.¹ Obviously, Corinth demonstrated a present condition about the body and not what ought to be true.² Yet, even with the problems it is still Christ's body on which God bestowed His supreme regard.³

However, the illustration points out that the body must be able to function together as a body or it ceases to exist as a body.⁴ So, Paul reasons, if the Holy Spirit guides in the soul temple of persons and brings these together into another temple, the church, where He has the privilege of leadership, then harmony and unity of function should be seen.⁵ Only in this way will they show the close relationship "that should exist

¹This idea is covered by Schweizer, p. 75.

²Lenski, St. Paul to the Corinthians, p. 534.

³White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 12.

⁴MacArthur, p. 12..

⁵Charles Webb Carter, The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), p. 285.

among all members of the church of Christ."¹ "Thus the church cannot be one body except by living in Christ, as Christ's body. And it cannot live as Christ's body except by being one body."²

A witness to this intimacy of feeling that the members should have for one another and which Christ has for the body is given in Matt 25:34-45. Those upon whom the blessing is pronounced are told, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (vs. 40). When one is hungry or naked or imprisoned, Christ feels that hurt as if it were in His body. So should we. Again in Acts 9:5 Christ identifies Himself to Saul as the object of the persecutions falling upon His people.

So the body metaphor has an important place in the demonstration of Christ's intimate concern for the believer. More than that, it challenges the church to find in Christ's life a pattern of service in which it too must continue to fulfill His mission.

The Matter of Diversity

There are certain qualities of relationship that suggest themselves by the body concept. Three of these will be described. The first is the matter of diversity. Paul extends this point over several verses to

¹White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 285.

²Schweizer, p. 56.

demonstrate that "the body does not consist of one member but of many" (1 Cor 12:14 ff.). There are not only feet and hands, eyes and ears, but parts are with "honor" and some, while immodest, are vitally important. The argument here is that a collection of identical parts is not a body. There is only a body when all the various organs are assembled and working together. "Without its members, a body is nonexistent."¹

Paul's application of the illustration is obvious. The church body, too, must have a variety of gifts in its members so that it may function effectively. A church in which all have the same manifestation, be it tongues or whatever, would fail to qualify as a body. So in Corinth "the remedy for this malfunction of the body, which is being caused by the overevaluation of certain of its parts, is to see that all the parts (gifts) are essential and that all of the gifts are intended by the Spirit."²

The warning is that a church that seeks to "concentrate on a limited number of gifts, will inevitably result in a partial and incomplete ministry."³ Completeness requires diversity. "The diversity of gifts

¹Johnson, p. 7.

²Byron Lee Rogillio, "How the Spiritual Gifts of the Laos Can Be Called Forth, Developed, and Utilized in the Local Church." Ed.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1971.

leads to a diversity of operations,"¹ for "God has set in the church different gifts."² Like the body, the church must be an organism, not an organ. Variety is essential, for not even God paints a rainbow with just one color.

Interdependence in the Body

A second lesson taught in the body figure is that of interdependence. This is implicit in the suggested comments that Paul applies to the body organs. For instance, jealousy on the part of an eye or of the head toward another organ, in which it refused to cooperate with the whole, would lead to a malfunction of the body and thus a total breakdown of the organism. Even the weaker parts are indispensable (1 Cor 12:22).

Again Paul notes the implications of the figure. As God has "adjusted the body" (vs. 24), so the same divine planning can be seen in the distributions of spiritual gifts. "All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills" (vs. 11). It is through this act of supplying the body by the gifts which complement each other that God causes the church to operate harmoniously.

This willingness to be a part of a team is often one of the missing motives within church memberships. Too

¹White, Testimonies, 9:145.

²White, Gospel Workers, p. 481.

many feel adequate to live independently of the body. A pietistic isolationism expressed as "My God and I," ignores that it is in loving others that God dwells in us (1 John 4:12).

The Need for Unity

Mutual care demands unity. "God has so adjusted the body . . . that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another" (1 Cor 12:24, 25). The idea of an eye being independent of the body or a hand and foot rejecting each other's service to the body is nonsense.

How real is this unity to be? Verse 26 places it in the psychological dimension of sympathy. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." As in the human body a toothache or an upset stomach can affect the entire organism, so the church must build a relationship of deep identity. Then both hurts and joys of individuals become avenues of unity.

The first eleven chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians reveal that unity was often lacking in the relationships of that church. Paul appealed to them to seek it.

The call to unity is well illustrated in the model given by the Godhead in 12:4-6. Regardless of which gifts or blessings are being given to the church,

it is "the same Spirit, . . . the same Lord, . . . the same God who inspires them all in every one." The oneness of the Trinity demonstrates the unity that Paul wishes for the church. While men may see different manifestations of heaven's provision, it is the "same" God at work. The members of Christ's body must be so unified.

It is important to note that this unity is not opposed to the diversity mentioned above. This unity does not require a stereotype. Indeed, it is the element of diversity that makes the unity meaningful. "True religion unites hearts, not only with Christ, but with one another."¹

The fourth chapter of Ephesians, to be noted later in the discussion on gifts, has a strong emphasis on unity. Paul appeals to his readers to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3).

To illustrate this pattern, he points to the element of "oneness" seen in the body, in baptism, and in the members of the Godhead.² Whichever aspect of the message the readers thought of, or whichever member

¹Ibid., p. 484.

²Note the emphasized "one." "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph 4:4-6).

of deity they thought it involved, they were confronted with an illustration of unity.

This comment on oneness introduces the Ephesian statement on gifts, which concludes in vss. 13-16 with a further appeal for unity. The goal of the gifts, Paul says, is "to attain the unity of the faith." He then adds several measurements of what that unity means. The word translated "attain" is katantao, which is often used of a traveler reaching a destination.¹

The destination for the church body in unity is that state of maturity (teleion) to be reached. This is to be measured by nothing less than the "stature of the fulness of Christ" (vs. 13). This maturity in Christ is to be a growing process, by which the instability of children will be left behind. "We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (vs. 15).

But while the growth is directed by the head, the body members have a responsibility in working together. This requires "every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its function" (Eph 4:16, Jer. Bible). "This unity, moreover, is not external and mechanical, but internal and organic. It is not superimposed, but, by virtue of

¹Francis Foulkes, The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1963), p. 121.

the power of the indwelling Christ, proceeds from within the organism of the church."¹ There is a community of operation with a common focus in Him, whose the body is. The unity is the "unity of the Spirit" (Eph 4:3). We are united, for the "Christ in us will meet the Christ in our brethren."²

The body, functioning as a unit, reminds the member that he is limited by the body and by the control of the head. If faithful to his calling, he will not try to "be self-sufficient, or to move beyond the limits of the purpose and control and love of Christ."³ The church body is to move in unison, for "in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent."⁴

The Privilege of Fellowship

An aspect of the church body life much noted in recent nurture discussions is that of a unique fellowship. Fellowship is the usual translation of the Greek term koinonia. In its twenty appearances in the New Testament, the King James Version translates it also as contribution, communion, distribution, and communication.

¹William Hendriksen, Exposition of Ephesians (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 181.

²White, Testimonies, 9:188.

³Foulkes, p. 43.

⁴White, Gospel Workers, p. 487.

From the root meaning it carries the idea of having "in common." So fellowship is "too weak" but it is the "best term available" for the usual sense of the word.¹

Schweizer says this term is related to the body theme, for in the Hebrew thought pattern man was thought of not primarily as an individual but as one acting in his responsibility to God and his relation to his fellow men.² This is basic to koinonia.

This community of faith is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Its development is an integral part of His work.³ Koinonia is called the "fellowship of the Spirit" (Phil 2:1, KJV), as well as the "fellowship of his Son" (1 Cor 1:9).

The body fellowship in the New Testament is not to be identified with the camaraderie of a secular club, for the core idea is not "social or associative, but theological and constitutive."⁴ Even the attending of religious functions as a group does not necessarily mean that this concept of fellowship has been met. Differentiation is made here between the association of persons and, as the word requires, "participation in

¹Clowney, p. 72.

²Schweizer, p. 78.

³Howard A. Snyder, "The Fellowship of the Spirit," Christianity Today 15 (6 November 1970):6.

⁴Clowney, p. 72.

in something in which others also participate."¹ That which they are together is more than the sum of the people involved for Another is with them. Distinctions of race or status or sex are lost in the union where all are "one person in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28, NEB).

Snyder notes two additional aspects of koinonia: He sees the fellowship as (1) a foretaste of the eternal fellowship in heaven, and (2) analogous to the communion between Christ and the Father.² Perhaps this is the thought reflected in the double use of the word in 2 John 1:3, "That you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." The body climate in which such fellowship can be recognized is the environment into which the Spirit may pour His gifts.

Special Meaning of the Body Symbol

The body metaphor is not the only illustration used for the church and its members in the New Testament. Others include a woman, a house, the branch, or a flock of sheep.³ However, attention has been given to the body illustration here because it is the setting

¹J. J. Campbell, "Koinonia and Its Cognates in the New Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature 51 (1932):353.

²Snyder, "The Fellowship of the Spirit," p. 5.

³Rev 12; 1 Pet 2:4-8; John 15:1-11; John 10:1-18.

Paul uses to deal with spiritual gifts. And the body metaphor, with its interdependent members, is immediately understandable to every person, regardless of culture.

A body is an organism. It exhibits the aspects of living, such as growth and replacement. It is a human body. In contrast to the branch or vine or sheep, the church stands in a higher order of creation. As a human body, the church is subject to the temptation of independence. But it cannot be independent for it is Christ's body.

As a human body, the church is capable of performing tasks. Again that work is not just any job. It is specific, for it is the body through which Christ works. This will be studied in chapter V.

Under the Greek influence of the first century, the body was often denigrated as a physical handicap to the pure essence of spirit. So the teaching about the unity of the body and Spirit must have spoken vividly to the early believers, especially those of Gentile background, about the beauty of God's creation and the need for purity and obedience. The body was not an evil burden. Instead, it became the medium by which the Spirit of God functioned in the church. It spoke of a closeness of heaven and earth. It gave continual substance to Christ's promise to be with His followers to

the close of the age (Matt 28:20).

God's graciousness to this body will now be noted.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH AS A CHARISMATIC BODY

The word "charismatic" strikes the modern ear with a number of nuances. These have both secular¹ and religious colorings. But the word has Biblical usage and is appropriate to the topic under discussion. However, some sharpening of its meaning here will be in order.

In the modern religious world the term "charismatic" has almost become the exclusive property of those who are speaking for the Neo-Pentecostal movement. It tends to particularly connote a seeking for the Spirit and the use of glossolalia.

I reject this limitation of the word. In the first place such a connotation as mentioned above is not an accurate response to the word as used in the

¹It was the nineteenth century German theoretician in the fields of economics and sociology, Max Weber, who is credited with bringing the word into modern language. He used "charisma" to describe a particular type of authority which some people displayed in leadership roles. They were of a special quality of personality which drew from others a "devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character." Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1947), pp. 328, 358.

Bible. Also, since the word does have a real and useful meaning in the Bible, it is fair that it be allowed to serve any Christian group which meet the qualifications inherent in it. It is difficult to find another word in English that serves as well. The word "gifted" might be used. But it has come to have meanings that exalt the one so described, which is contrary to what we shall see is the special message of the Bible. Another suggested word is "graced." As noted below, "grace" is the usual noun translation. As a verb, "graced" has nuances of "to honor," "to dignify," "to adorn."

Background of the Term

The term is rooted in the Greek New Testament to the word charis. The word occurs over 150 times there, being used in every book except Matthew, Mark, and the first and third epistles of John. It is translated in the King James Version by such words as "favor," "grace," "gracious," "thank," "benefit," "pleasure," "liberality," "thankworthy," and "acceptable." "Grace" is by far the most common translation.¹ In most of the places where it is used, God is the subject of the sentence. One lexicon notes that the "New Testament writers use charis pre-eminently of that kindness by which God bestows

¹The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1903), p. 797.

favor, even upon the ill-deserving."¹ Of interest to this paper was the idea that it was also indicated as the word used for "the capacity and ability due to the grace of God."² (Emphasis mine.) Another lexicon lists "practical application of good will, a (sign of) favor, gracious deed or gift."³

A related form is charisma. It appears seventeen times in the New Testament, always by Paul except one use in 1 Pet 4:10.

Both of these words occur in the same sentence in 1 Cor 1:4-7. "Because of the grace [charis] of God . . . so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift [charismati]." New Testament Professor Bartling gave this helpful explanation of the text:

The one, the essential life-giving gift, the other the gift that sustains and nurtures that life--the gift of God's love in Christ and the gift of Christ's love in His Spirit--without the first there would be no message to proclaim, without the second no vitality in the proclamation--the first to restore man to fellowship with God and to a life of community in the new humanity, Christ's body; the second to set that man a task in that body and to empower him to act.⁴

¹Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1886), p. 666.

²Ibid.

³William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: University Press, 1957), p. 886.

⁴Walter J. Bartling, "The Congregation of Christ--a Charismatic Body" Concordia Theological Monthly 40 (Spring 1966):69.

The Gracious Giver

The discussion proper on "gifts" will come later. The intention here is to recognize the Giver. God is the gracious God, and the "gifts" are a demonstration of that grace. This recognition is basic to the understanding of the charismatic body. The church exists only because of God's grace in the free gift of His Son. This makes possible the salvation in which believers become members of the church which, in turn, is active and functioning because of the Spirit who provides the "gifts" for its operation. This is recognized by Bartling's statement that "every congregation is a charismatic community" because it is a "body shaped by the Spirit of Christ," for if it lives at all, it lives by "the charismatic infusion of the Spirit."¹

A basic idea that Paul was trying to impress upon the Corinthian church in the twelfth to fourteenth chapters of the first epistle was that they were a charismatic people. What they had, they had been given. But instead of a humble attitude they were proud and competitive in their relationships. Members boasted of the superiority of their contribution or skill. The spirit of love had been lost. In its place was discord and disunity.

To meet this situation, Paul spoke here of a

¹Ibid.

sovereign Spirit who was the source and distributor of "gifts." "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; . . . All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills" (1 Cor 12:4-11).

Notice again the concern here for the unity of the Godhead. Members of the Trinity work together. Regardless of the manifestation to the church it is the same Spirit providing the "gift." It is not one Spirit for wisdom, another for healing, another for tongues. All these "gifts" are the outworking of the Holy Spirit in a gesture of grace, that is, a charismatic gesture to the church. At Corinth, the intra-church enmity was destroying the concept of unity which was a vital element of the charisma.

The truth was that since their "gifts" were of grace, not one of these members deserved what he had received. Gifts are not merited. They are given. That is why they are gifts and not rewards. And as gifts they are subject to the Spirit by whose authority they are received.

This is important to the correct understanding of spiritual gifts. Eduard Schweizer says it well in his comment on the passage being considered here.

They are first "gifts of grace," an expression that underlies the fact that they are not man's talents, but God's actions, even if God uses very often man's natural abilities or his education.

They are secondly "services," stressing the indispensable openness toward the fellow members. Thirdly, the gifts are called "actions," a term by which Paul shows that any ministry in the church is to be thought of as an event rather than an official position or dignity with privileges and rights.¹

To be charismatic is to give the glory to God.

Other Terms for Gift

This chapter has so far focused on the dimensions of the word charis. But there are other New Testament terms that parallel and support this concept of "gifts."

First Corinthians 12:1 speaks of "spiritual gifts." The word here is pneumatikon. Scholars are not agreed on the translation to be used here. Morris explains why. "The word pneumatikon is of undetermined gender. It could accordingly denote "spiritual men" or "spiritual things." Usually it is held to refer to "spiritual things," i.e., the spiritual gifts."² Most of the frequently used English translations follow the neuter concept. The Revised Standard Version does give an optional "spiritual persons" in a footnote. Phillips translates it as "spiritual matters." Since the context of the twelfth chapter is on "gifts," spiritual gifts is strongly suggested as the correct meaning.

Pneumatikon also appears in Rom 1:11. There is

¹Schweizer, p. 59.

²Morris, p. 166.

is used as an adjective with charisma. "I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift." In 1 Cor 14:1 the word is used alone, as in 12:1, and is again given as "spiritual gifts." This word, like charisma, is peculiarly a Pauline term, except again for a double reference in 1 Pet 2:5.

A third New Testament word for "gift" is dōma. It is used twice in the synoptics and twice in Pauline writings. In each case it is translated as "gift." Of interest here is the fact that one of the occurrences is in Eph 4:8, a passage dealing with spiritual gifts. There Paul quotes it from the Septuagint use in Ps 68:18, an ascension song applied to Christ.

The last word to notice in this list is dōrea. In the King James Version it is translated in each of its eleven appearances as "gift." It is always used "charismatically." That is, it is always used in speaking of "gifts" of God to man. For instance, this is the term that Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria about the "gift of God" (John 4:10). Luke used it several times in the book of Acts, including 2:38, in reference to the "gift" of the Holy Spirit.

Dōrea is used in parallel with charis in Eph 4:7, KJV ("grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ"). So Paul used dōrea for "gift" in vs. 7 and dōma in vs. 8, apparently indicating that in his mind they were interchangeable.

These three words--pneumatikon, doma, and dorea--have been included here in a study on the background of "gifts" because they are seen to complement the term "charismatic" as used for the church body. That is, they help to define the body as dependent upon the grace of God to provide by "gifting" its essential elements. Their intent, in the verses noted, like charis, speaks of the initiative of God in acting generously with kindness to His church. The principle presented above holds true. "The Holy Spirit distributes (gifts) . . . through pure grace" so that there is "no reason to see any personal merit" in church members.¹ Therefore the church is charismatic.

Being a Charismatic Church

The term "charismatic church" is appropriate when used in the understanding of the New Testament perspective which has been noticed in the preceding word study. Perhaps these could be summarized as a set of minimum expectations that should mark such a church. I suggest the following as necessary:

1. The members would hold a doctrine of church which recognizes that the total authority for the community of faith is based on the grace of God and not on the merit of its people.

¹Jean Hering, The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (London: The Epworth Press, 1962), p. 129.

2. They would admit that whatever "gifts" and properties are found in the body are fully received by the outreach of divine grace (Jas 1:17).

3. They will determine that the "gifts" and workings of that body will be used for no selfish ends but only as a demonstration of a disinterested ministry in Jesus Christ by gracious self-giving for others.

Under this umbrella, I believe that the term "charismatic church" is a legitimate term to use for a genuine Christian body. The concept it carries is that the church is not independent in its operation. It is totably dependent upon the Holy Spirit, as the representative of the Godhead, who has been sent to empower the church for its operation. This power is provided freely as a demonstration of grace, i.e., charis. To be totally a recipient body is to be a charismatic body. "The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ."¹ "God's church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts, and endowed with the Holy Spirit."²

It is recognized that the term has been rejected in many Christian settings because of its secular use where the person with "charisma" is honored for his special ability. Also many church groups, if they admit

¹White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 9.

²Ibid., p. 12.

to being charismatic, are concerned with being identified with the Neo-Pentecostal movement and with its glossalalia.

Perhaps the time has come to restore the phrase to its New Testament intention. This seems important from a doctrinal standpoint as well as a linguistic one. In the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, the doctrine of righteousness by faith has served to remind the membership of salvation by grace alone. Salvation is a free gift. No human merit can add to the work of Christ's atonement. But often the service of the members to their church, as a body, or to the world, is seen as dependent upon the skill and energy of the human agent. The believer trusted Christ for justification but sees himself basically independent in the life of service.

But this dichotomy is not Biblical. The member is under charis. That which he receives is never his own. "God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. . . . Wherever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing."¹

¹Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1908), p. 77.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH AS A SUPPLIED BODY

This study holds that God puts His people together into the church, the body of Christ. At each point, God takes the initiative. His work is a charismatic work, a work of grace. Therefore the benefits provided are called "gifts." It is by means of these gifts that the body is supplied so that it might exist and live and function. This provision is the content of the present chapter.

Gifts, while sovereignly distributed, are not arbitrarily forced. The foot can say, "I do not want to do the work of a foot." It can only be a foot, but it does not have to be an active foot. "Although gifts come as a result of divine purpose and initiative, . . . they are [not] bestowed apart from a human willingness . . . to receive them."¹

The Lesson from Corinth

Although there are other Biblical statements² on spiritual gifts, the discussion in 1 Cor 12-14 is

¹Rogillio, p. 41.

²Especially Rom 12:6-8 and Eph 4:8-11.

probably the most significant. Several terms are used here to describe the gifts. These include pneumatikoi, spiritual things (12:1); charismata, gifts of grace (12:4); diakonia, service (12:5); energema, workings (12:6); and phanerosis, manifestations (12:7).¹

Much of what Paul has to say to the church at Corinth has its context in a response to problems there. The discussion in 1 Cor 12-14 strongly suggests that a major aim of these chapters was to aid in the proper understanding and operation of "gifts."² They warn that despite the fact of God's giving, "gifts" may be misused. Corinth was a church well blessed, "not lacking in any spiritual gift" (1 Cor 1:4-7). Yet the "gifts" which God had given the church for growth and service had now come to minister to pride. "It was obvious that they had a spiritual superiority complex, and it became obnoxious."³ "The gifts of the Holy Spirit were commercialized and became a source of rivalry, disorder, envy, and acrimony."⁴

¹For a discussion of these words see Donald Bridge and David Phypers, Spiritual Gifts and the Church (Downer's Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1973), and Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931).

²Rogillio, p. 11.

³J. Grant Swank, Jr., "A Plea to Some Who Speak in Tongues," Christianity Today 19 (28 February 1975): 12.

⁴Fitch, p. 33.

In Corinth, the problem focused especially in the question of tongues.¹ Bartling sees the entire discussion of these three chapters dealing with the practical concern of the tongues problem.² This is the only place in Paul's writings where he mentions tongues in the "gift" setting. In 1 Cor 12:2, 3, he is apparently reminding converts there that in their earlier heathen state ecstatic outbursts were not unknown.³ The verses read:

You know that when you were heathen, you were led astray to dumb idols, however you may have been moved. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

So Paul is "disputing a misunderstanding of the church" where supernatural phenomena are seen "as the highest gifts of the Spirit."⁴ Unfortunately, the Corinthians had been "majoring" on the exciting and demonstrative concerns "while neglecting the best gifts."⁵

¹Since this study looks at the general question of spiritual gifts in their relation to the body, specific discussion of any particular "gift," such as tongues, is not detailed here. It is recognized that the tongues issue raises the most questions of any "gift" mentioned because of its immediacy in the current Neo-Pentecostal movement. Many of the bibliographical entries at the end of this paper which speak of "gifts" include a section on the topic of glossolalia. The reader is referred to these.

²Bartling, p. 67.

³Carter, p. 272.

⁴Schweizer, p. 57.

⁵Rogillia, p. 80.

It is in the twelfth chapter of 1 Cor that Paul places the "gift" question in the setting of the members of a body as a means of correcting these errors. At Corinth the real meaning of "gifts" had been lost sight of in the desire for self honor. Competition for such things as tongues had come to give prominence to some members. Each one sought to "do his thing."

To avoid this problem, it became important to define and identify some specific "gifts." These must not be seen just in isolation but in their relation to the church as a whole.

The "Gift" Lists

Various "gifts" which God supplies to His church are found in New Testament lists. The four main ones, which are basic to this study, are provided by Paul. Two are in 1 Cor 12:8-10 and vs. 28. The others are located in Rom 12:6-8 and Eph 4:11. The lists are by no means identical, though there is some overlap. Eighteen different "gifts" can be found in comparing these four statements. An additional statement on "gifts," somewhat similar to the one in Rom 12, is given in 1 Pet 4:10, 11.

Some see the "gifts" listed in these statements as having meaning only in the early church. They were given then but are non-repeatable phenomena. Other scholars place some "gifts" in a supernatural setting

for the apostolic age and others as being universal for the entire church age. Many of the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal groups give the primary stress on the gift of tongues. There are also several writers in recent years who have developed a highly structured system of applications from the "gift" lists in which very specific assignments are made in the field of Christian nurture.¹

I see a different purpose in Paul's "gift" lists. The lists are not to be taken as exhaustive or final. While the offices or services included are very real and continuous with the Christian church, the lists are open-ended. They are, therefore, to some extent illustrative. They are not neat and precise arrangements under which persons can be conveniently filed for computer selection. Instead, they demonstrate how the Holy Spirit seeks to equip the members of the body in different times and in various places so the needs of the

¹One of the strongest examples of this is in Bill Gotthard, "Understanding Spiritual Gifts," (Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1973). Gotthard's hermeneutics may be criticized for placing a too rigid compartmentalization on Paul's terms charismation, diakonia, and energma in 1 Cor 12:4, 5. The Scripture suggests the idea of a unity rather than a separation. He also superimposes these definitions on Paul's other "gift" lists, when, in fact, the lists overlap and give no evidence that Paul meant to take them as specific parts of a whole or divide them neatly among different epistles. This violates a principle of Bible interpretation that the primary meaning must be sought in application to the original recipients of the message. Others have published variations of this approach.

body can be served that it may function as a representative of Christ in the world.

On what basis can this interpretation be defended? As noted above, the spiritual gift concept is primarily a Pauline teaching. Yet Paul's lists seem to have no common format. Each appears in its setting for the purpose of that message. If Paul saw the "gift" list as a universal structure fitting every church, then we could expect to see the same pattern in the four statements. But we find just the opposite.

Instead, as outlined in the earlier chapter on the charismatic concept, the entire New Testament shares the concern for the work of the Holy Spirit with His indwelling of the Christian and His operation in the life. The concern must be first for the gift of the Holy Spirit in His person. Then the particular "gift" He offers is no longer the primary concern. When the member has the assurance that he has the indwelling Spirit, he is willing to let the Spirit have His unique way, whatever that may be.

What then do the "gift" lists show? In their contexts they show different purposes for being written.

The Ephesian passage lists four "enabling"-type "gifts." Their setting in the chapter suggests that they are placed together because of a common function in which they serve the church by training for growth

and maturity.¹ Paul is making a pastoral appeal for an appropriate life style, which is to be modeled after Christ. The gifts are seen as a means to that end.

The Rom 12 passage is also hortatory rather than didactic. The appeal of the chapter is for a total dedication of the person, in his body, to the will of God. Such a transformation, Paul says, is a "logical service." The statement is reminiscent of the Hebrew sacrificial service.² Paul here uses the same body-member illustration that is used in 1 Cor 12. "For as in one body we have many members, . . . so we, though many, are one body in Christ" (Rom 12:4). Paul's concern here is not to identify "gifts" so much as to encourage their use. "Having gifts that differ, . . . let us use them" (vs. 6). He says only the prophets can prophecy, only teachers can teach, therefore it is important that each perform the task called for by his "gift." "Gifts" are not spiritual gifts just in their possession but in their operation. Only in ministry are they realized.

First Cor 12 should be looked at again in this question of the setting. The first list there (vss. 8-10) is similar to the one in Romans, in that the list

¹Further discussion on this point will be given in the next chapter.

²Curtis Vaughan and Bruce Corley, Romans: A Study Guide (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1976), p. 135.

seems to be secondary in importance to the point being made about the unity of the Spirit. The contrast is between the variety of "gifts" and the "one Spirit," who is, in each case, the agent to provide the "gift." The "gifts" are not listed here in a modern, scientific, comprehensive summary. Paul is illustrating a point.¹

The fourth list, found in 1 Cor 12:28, begins with apostles and prophets, the same as the list of Eph 4. Then the two diverge. Teachers are included as number three here rather than with pastors as number four in Ephesians. In addition, there are "workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues." So if Paul is to be seen as structuring a specific order, he has now violated that order.

A few writers have even taken vs. 29 as a fifth list.² To do so seems to be completely missing the point. Paul's rhetorical question: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" is obviously referring back to the "gifts" in the previous verse. The only reasonable answer to Paul is, "No!" Each member,

¹As an example of those who see a different emphasis here, note Harold Lindsell, "Spiritual Gifts," Christianity Today 19 (11 April 1975):5, 6. He sees a division to "three aspects of man's nature," i.e., intellect, will, and emotion.

²William McRae, The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1976), p. 44.

like members of the body, has a specific task to do and not all do the same task.¹

So each of the lists is seen to have been used by Paul for an illustrative purpose. Any overlap, or difference, is incidental. No list is to be taken as complete or exhaustive in naming all the possible options which the Holy Spirit may assign for church needs. It is entirely likely that if Paul were speaking to a different age or situation, his listings of "gifts" would be different from any of the four lists that have been noted.

Natural Talents and Abilities

The position taken here that the "gift" lists are open suggests another question that is frequently raised. What relationship, it is asked, is there between the spiritual gifts and natural talents or abilities that a person has?

Several responses have been made. Spiritual gifts may be seen as "clearly supernatural" and bestowed separately from any natural talent. Others see the "gifts" as essentially natural talents given in creation and claimed by redemption, though they may be redirected

¹"Paul is not stereotyped. . . . It is Paul's evident intention not to distinguish fixed offices from occasional functions that were exercised in the church but to call attention to the great variety of notable gifts and functions that were distributed in the church." Lenski, p. 538.

or intensified. A third option overlaps these concepts and finds spiritual gifts including both those that are clearly supernatural as well as ordinary abilities which have been used for spiritual ends.¹

Among those who make a sharp break between "gifts" and talents, Flynn presents a typical distinction.

"Talents have to do with techniques and methods; gifts have to do with spiritual abilities. Talents depend on natural power, gifts on spiritual endowment."² Another makes the distinction even more specific: "When we speak of the gifts of the Spirit we are not speaking about the natural talents with which certain individuals have been endowed by natural birth. We are speaking of supernatural endowment."³

But some feel that such clear distinctions are hard to make. Spiritual gifts may include both "natural endowments, awakened by the gift of the Spirit, or special endowments of the Spirit."⁴

One possible answer here is to measure the gift by the result of its manifestation. So the spiritual

¹Adapted from Rogillio, pp. 12, 13.

²Leslie B. Flynn, Nineteen Gifts of the Spirit (Wheaton: Visitor Books, 1974), p. 22.

³Dwight J. Pentecost, The Divine Comforter (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1963), p. 165.

⁴Carter, p. 271.

gifts can be both "talents and abilities given by (the Spirit) to strengthen, help, and serve the church."¹

The test is: Do "they proclaim Jesus as Lord?"²

Harold Snyder's 1973 discussion in Christianity Today gave helpful insights. He sees people with "latent potentialities" that are developed only when the Holy Spirit operates in the life of the believer. So in the Christian, a "native ability" is that ordinarily given by God. It becomes a spiritual gift "when it has caught fire."³

I find these last statements which recognize both natural and supernatural endowments, functioning under the Holy Spirit, as the better definition of a spiritual gift. The concept of an open-ended "gift" list recognizes that the Spirit is unlimited in ways in which He chooses to work through the human instrument. He may demonstrate in ways out of the ordinary; in ways beyond man's normal operation. But more than likely, He takes the natural use of hands or feet or voice or brain and molds it into a divine witness. Within the context of the doctrine of creation, every breath and heartbeat is a demonstration of heavenly care. So in the service of the church, the use of inherited or cultivated abilities and the demonstration of functions obviously beyond the

¹Lindsell, p. 5.

²Schweizer, p. 31.

³p. 16.

person's normal capacity to do are both evidence that the Holy Spirit is involved.

Paul's statement in the introduction to Romans, where he speaks of wanting to impart "some spiritual gift" by which they may be "mutually encouraged," may well be indicating the operation of dedicated natural talents rather than some suprahuman content (Rom 1:11, 12).

Ellen White also seems to be inclusive in her use of the terms "gifts" and "talents." Her own experience of finding an unusual call to the prophetic office,¹ testifies to her acceptance of a supernatural endowment far beyond any natural abilities which she had at the time. However, in her writings, as for instance in the chapter on "Talents" in the book Christ's Object Lessons, several words are used interchangeably.²

¹This is the one spiritual gift named in all four of Paul's lists.

²The following are examples: "Talents used are talents multiplied. . . . The Lord desires us to use every gift we have. . . . We shall have greater gifts to use. . . . He does not supernaturally endow us with the qualifications . . . but will strengthen every faculty" (pp. 353, 354). "The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit" (p. 327). "In a special sense the goods of heaven were committed to the followers of Christ. . . . The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God" (p. 327). "The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents. . . . It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. . . . In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that

In summary, the subject of "gifts" is not included in the Bible to encourage ecstatic demonstrations but for very pragmatic reasons. The body needs to grow and work. The church is supplied for this work under the wisdom and direction of the Holy Spirit. To each member He supplies gracious appropriations so that together the membership forms a program of total care and ability.

"The whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its own function. So the body grows" (Eph 4:16, Jerusalem Bible). The abundance of gifts reminds us that "the body depends for its growth and its work on the Lord's direction, on His provision for the whole, and on His arrangement for the inter-relation of the members."¹ How this supplied body works is the next aspect of the study.

we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men" (p. 328). (*Italics supplied.*)

¹Foulkes, p. 125.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AS A MINISTERING BODY

Several of the observations made up to this point about spiritual gifts have recognized the pragmatic concern. The understanding of the useful purpose of "gifts" is vital to an adequate picture of the doctrine. It is now time to focus on this emphasis.

God is not accidental in His works, so "gifts" are provided for a reason. A basic reason is succinctly stated by Paul. They are provided to enable people to serve "for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7). A parallel concern in Romans has it, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them" (Rom 12:6, emphasis supplied). Or, in the Petrine words, "As each has received a gift, employ it" (1 Pet 4:10).

This function is ministry. "Gifts" are not given so that the recipient boasts, "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing" (Rev 3:17). Instead, "gifts" make possible a ministry with a deeper sacrifice, for the Christian sees himself, in his body, as a presentation to God (Rom 12:1). Unless the believer has this goal as his motivation, then any seeking after "gifts" will grieve the Holy Spirit.

Like ancient Israel, the church can easily miss this reason for being called. They may focus on the reward rather than the call to be servants. If so, they fail in witness. Their ministry is to be the ministry of Jesus, done in His behalf.

Christ continues His ministry through the believing community. The church does not exist for her own purpose but only as the servant of Christ. . . . This service is an obligation and no one may contract out of it. . . . Every believer is bound to render to Christ that form of service for which he has been equipped.¹

The church, as a body in ministry, is to be viewed in two aspects: ministry within the body and ministry by the body to the world. Both are essential.

Ministry within the Body

The body has first a responsibility to itself. In the recent literature, the term "renewal" has come into frequent usage. It carries the concept not only that the church body needs regular care but that all members need to be aware of their responsibility in providing that care.² The body must be healthy before it

¹Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1963), p. 52.

²Books on church renewal are often addressed to both the "clergy" and the general church member without professional seminary training. Examples of these include: Gene Getz, Building up One Another (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1976); David Haney, Renew My Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1972); and Wallace Fisher, Preface to Parish Renewal (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968).

can serve the world. This demands an active support system.

This concept of mutual support is especially accented in 1 Cor 12. Paul's extended illustration of the body members in their sharing relationship say that. No part can say, "I have no need of you" (vs. 21). Even those that are weaker are indispensable to the well being of the whole (vs. 22). This integration is so complete that the object stated is that members have "the same care for one another" (vss. 25, 26). Each serves "for the common good" (vs. 7). That such a pattern of care is attainable is attested to in the early church record. "All who believed were together and had all things in common; . . . and distributed them to all, as any had need (Acts 2:44, 45).

In the concluding section of Paul's discussion on "gifts" in 1 Cor 14, he rejects the use of gifts for their own sake or for the display of an individual. His concern is that the church may be edified and built up. "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. Now I want . . . that the church may be edified" (1 Cor 14:4, 5). Superiority of "gift" is established by its usefulness.¹ The parallel passage in Rom 12 speaks of the body gifts. Paul

¹Geoffrey B. Wilson, First Corinthians (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971), p. 200.

says, "Having gifts, . . . let us use them" (vs. 6). In vs. 7 and 8 he lists several of these. Again service to the body is suggested.

The passage on gifts in Eph 4 has a slightly different focus. The position is that some special "gifts" were given, that by the use of these the members of the church might become more effective in their work. It is not denied that such "gifts" as apostles and evangelists may have an outward thrust to the world. But the context here suggests that these "gifts," especially the last one of pastor-teacher,¹ are aimed at the matter of body nurture. The term "body nurture" is used here deliberately to indicate that the church body means an organism rather than an organization.

What is the goal of this nurture? The answer is given. It is "to equip God's people for work in his service" (Eph 4:12, NEB).² The concept is that these "offices," such as the pastor, have the primary "task of serving the church," while the task "of the (equipped) laity is primarily to serve the world beyond the church."³

¹One office is suggested by the fact that in the Greek text the two words share a common article.

²The KJV and RSV give a different meaning here by the use of a comma after saints, making the second phrase a part of a series rather than the result of the first.

³Edsel Ammons, "Clergy and Laity: Equally

The phrase in vs. 12 (RSV), "the work of ministry" (diakonias), may apply to both inreach and outreach. The qualifications following seem to point to the inreach. It is to build up the body of Christ, to "attain to the unity of the faith and . . . knowledge," to maturity, to the measure of the "fulness of Christ," and "to grow up in every way into . . . Christ." This goal is to be realized, notes vs. 16, when every "part is working properly" on behalf of the whole body. "The Christian's priesthood begins when he recognizes his part in the redemptive purpose of the body."¹

Ministry to the World

The second responsibility of the church as the body of Christ is in a ministry to the world outside of itself. Harkness warns against the common tendency of the layman to see his service as a Christian limited to what he does in his church. While this is valuable and necessary, she says "it is what he does in the world that his fullest witness and service are rendered."² God's attitude of love to the world, expressed in Christ (John 3:16), needs to be also the expression of

Called " Christian Century 92 (5 February 1975): 109. This sentence is not meant to ignore the fact that the "gift" of evangelism may sometimes be found in the same person as that of pastor, hence the title "pastor-evangelist."

¹Eastwood, p. 233.

²Harkness, p. 30.

His church. "Our Lord designed that His church should reflect to the world, the fullness and sufficiency that we find in Him."¹

As Christ came to the end of His earthly ministry, He gave recognition that the time had come for His visible service to be continued in the persons of His followers. "As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). To commit to men the responsibility of witnessing to the world of the ministry of Christ was asking of them the impossible. Humanity is not qualified. But Christ made provision for this need. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you," He promised (Acts 1:8). This power to witness was to extend to the "end of the earth." In the Matthew account of the commission, it included "all nations" "to the close of the age" (Matt 28:19, 20).

Under the body figure, this world ministry cannot be done by only certain members. The body works in unity, in totality. So each member of the body must be willing to be used in the outreach ministry. Since the church exists to serve the world, "any restriction of the ministry . . . becomes ridiculous."²

¹White, Testimonies, 5:731.

²Francis O. Ayres, The Ministry of the Laity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 31.

The church, then, is for ministry. Ministry was the theme of Christ's mission for which He came to the world (Matt 20:28). Now He serves through the church, a ministering body.

Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.¹

The recognition of this servant model is essential for the proper understanding of spiritual gifts.

Temptations have been frequent for the body and its members to ignore or forget this concept of ministry. The concern of the early disciples was to be the greatest (Matt 20:26). In the Corinthian church "gifts" were desired for the sake of display. The Revelation pictures a church who saw herself a queen to be served by the world (Rev 18:7). And at other times the body became sectarian and isolated. It ministered only to itself and rejected the world as unworthy of its concern or service.

All of these patterns are in violation of God's plan for those who are the body of Christ. They miss the counsel of the One who said, "You also should do as I have done A servant is not greater than his master" (John 13:15, 16).

Spiritual gifts must not be promoted in a

¹White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 96.

congregation without including this service orientation as a vital factor. Without this concept, a "seeking of the Spirit" can become a malignant, self-centered exercise. But with the disinterested benevolence that marked the life of Jesus, present in His people, as members of His body, gifts function as heaven's avenue of grace (1) in a brotherly sense of service to others in the body, and (2) in a concerned outreach ministry to a needy world. "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Pet 4:10).

The "more excellent" environment that nourishes this sense of service shall now have our attention.

Gift Ministry Is Loving

Within the theological base by which the Bible presents spiritual gifts and their ministry, the concern for love is fundamental. "God so loved . . . that He gave" (John 3:16, emphasis supplied). So while Paul includes love as an ethical dimension, he sees it as more than an ethic.

It is especially in the context of ministry that Paul urges the necessity for love. As a Pharisee, he had known well the cold precision with which that earlier religion was marked. With his vision of Jesus, he suddenly realized how foreign this was to heaven's way. His new motto was, "The love of Christ controls

us" (2 Cor 5:14). This was a concept of ministry he could recommend.

The primary New Testament "gift" passage is the section that is 1 Cor 12-14. Chapter 12, which has been the basis for most of the discussions in this paper, sets the gifts in the body figure. Chapter 14 is of more concern for the application than for structure. As such, it has not been a major interest in this study. But the center portion, beginning at 12:31b and continuing to 14:1a, is important to both sections. It is a conclusion for the topic of chap. 12 and a foundation for chap. 14. So its significance needs to be included. "First Corinthians 13 is a part of Paul's discussion of the charismata."¹

Important as the "gifts" are, especially to the Corinthian's thinking as evidenced by the tension on tongues, Paul is concerned for basic attitudes.

The chapter (1 Corinthians 13) is not, as some have thought, a digression from the argument. Paul has not finished with the "gifts," and he has much to say about them in the following chapter. But here he is concerned to insist that the central thing is not the exercise of the "gifts." It is the practice of Christian love.²

So no dichotomy should be seen between chaps. 12 and 13. That would be unfair to the value Paul places

¹George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), p. 536.

²Morris, p. 180.

on one of the major operations of the Spirit as He supplies the "gifts." The choice is not meant to be "gifts" or love. The challenge is that the "gifts" operate in love.

Paul tells the Corinthians to see the superior gifts and adds that he will now show them a superior way for seeking them. . . . Nor does Paul elaborate the thesis that love is preferable to gifts. . . . Love is the all-dominating motive in seeking and in using spiritual gifts.¹

Paul, then, is not saying to have love instead of tongues or prophecy or faith. He is saying that "without love, gifts are impotent." The motivation for spiritual operation and the spring of action is to be a "deep sense of the love of Christ."²

The reasonableness of interpreting "gifts" and love in harmony rather than in separation is in recognizing that love does not operate in a vacuum. Love needs the "gifts" as a modus operandi. "No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and His fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ."³ Modern readers of 1 Cor 13 need to know along with its first readers that "gifts are the hands through which love serves."⁴

¹Lenski, St. Paul to the Corinthians, p. 543 (last emphasis supplied).

²Taylor G. Bunch, Love (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952), p. 13.

³White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 318.

⁴Lenski, St. Paul to the Corinthians, p. 576.

The Quality of Love

So love is seen as a charismatic "imperative."¹ Love here is agape, which the New Testament uses as a symbol of that total selfless giving demonstrated in the gift of Christ.²

In the Bible, this call to love is the challenge for humans to be used as witnesses in a quality of relationship that is of divine origin. "The human heart cannot produce it."³ "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). That Spirit, seen earlier as the distributor of "gifts," is here presented in the role of providing the love in which the "gifts" operate. This is one of His miracles. Not only is power given to the human to serve on behalf of Christ. He also gives that divine attitude as a quality of mind and heart.

It is the love of God, translated into human terms, rendered in the medium of human experience. It is an emotion, but more than an emotion. It is a form of love which is above and beyond all other forms of love, but without which no other form of love rises above tawdiness and selfishness. It is active, selfless, transforming, and can embrace the unloveable.⁴

Another quality of agape is that it takes the

¹Rogillio, p. 96.

²E.g., John 3:16; Eph 2:4; 5:2; Rom 5:8.

³White, Steps to Christ, p. 59.

⁴E. M. Blaiklock, The Way of Excellence (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1968), p. 12.

initiative. "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). It is "lavished upon others without a thought of whether they are worthy to receive it or not, since it proceeds "from the nature of the lover," rather than in the "merit in the beloved."¹

As an illustration of how close the agape quality in 1 Cor 13 is to the divine character, it has been suggested that the word "love," all through the chapter, could be replaced by the name "Christ" and "leave the chapter meaningful."²

Love, agape love, is the term defining in a special way that divine characteristic by which the members of the Godhead operate vis-a-vis humanity. "Gifts" are provided by Christ's Representative to earth so the body can operate as the body of Christ. It follows then that the attitude of Christ should be the motivation for that operation. It was Paul who said in agreement to this, "Increase and abound in love to one another and to all men" (1 Thes 3:12).

This figure seems to be the concept also presented in Eph 4:16. This is part of the passage noted in the last chapter on body nurture. The statement reads, "When each part is working properly, (then it)

¹Morris, p. 181.

²Blaiklock, p. 12.

makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love." Love is the essential catalyst for the body member to minister, both to other members and to the world. Only in that attitude does it follow its crucified Lord.

The Christian discovers the true meaning of crucifixion as he really begins to exercise his gift. Faithful ministry of the gift will lead him into depths of self giving he never dreamed possible--and God planned it this way.¹

Love in Presenting the Doctrine

When a pastor sees the doctrine of spiritual gifts as important, he is under obligation to present that message to his congregation. It is vital that this be done in the context of agape love. Two values can be mentioned.

First, it is possible that a doctrine can be limited to the statement of a proposition or a formula. While this is useful, even necessary, a doctrine must be more than that. Theology is an attempt to define faith. The doctrine of spiritual gifts calls for a faith that works by love. Thus they contribute to the unity of the faith, as member shares concern with member and with others. As with all doctrines, belief and practice must go together.

Secondly, a "gift" is not a gimmick. Spiritual gifts must not be presented as another method. When it

¹Snyder, "The Fellowship of the Spirit," p. 18.

is said that the "finishing of the work" depends upon the Holy Spirit and His enabling, there comes the danger of seeing these "gifts" as the ultimate machine. This is dangerous in that a machine is something to be used. Such a position would ignore that the "gifts" are spiritual gifts. The Spirit is sovereign. We are the servants. It would place us, in the words of Paul, as noisy gongs or clanging cymbals (1 Cor 13:1).

In avoiding the concept of "gifts" as either a gimmick or a formula, it must be remembered that love is always person-oriented. Congregations need to know this.

When a believer recognizes a "gift" in his life, he may take it as evidence of God's love. God loves him. As God gave the "gift" because He focused on the recipient, so the member must focus on the Giver rather than on the ability he has. Failure to see this was the problem with the rich young ruler who came to Jesus. He "loved the gifts of God more than he loved the Giver."¹

Love, like electricity, operates in a circuit. The current only flows in when it can flow on. Love, to change the metaphor, is never a dead-end road. The loving member is never a reservoir for love. He is its channel.

So the Christian comes to recognize that as God's

¹White, Desire of Ages, p. 520.

love focuses on his life, he in turn will be oriented to a loving concern of others. It will not be a gushy emotionalism. Rather, it will be the acting out of a principle that "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor 13:7).

It will be this relationship that will make the doctrine of "gifts" more than just a statement. Rather than a formula for "finishing the work," it will provide for God the Spirit-led lives by which He will finish the work.

Endurance of the "Gifts"

There is yet one more significant aspect of the "gifts" doctrine that has not been answered. It is answered in 1 Cor 13. That is the question of the endurance of "gifts."

First, we can be reminded of the final goal that was noticed earlier in the Eph 4 passage. The "gifts" mentioned there were to be "until" such achievements as unity, knowledge, and maturity, measured by the stature of Christ, were met (Eph 4:13-16). Such goals are worthy objectives for "gift" ministry in the present age.

But in 1 Cor 13 the ultimate satisfaction of the need for gifts is demonstrated. The expression of confidence that the "perfect" (teleion) will come is given. At that time such needs as language helps and prophetic

insights (vs. 8) will pass away. The partial, immature understanding, like a dim reflection in a mirror, will be replaced by opportunity for a full understanding (1 Cor 13:11, 12). In that perfect state the function of these may end. But "love never ends" (vs. 8). Those conditions, we believe, will be found in the new environment inaugurated at the return of Christ.

This must not be allowed to suggest that in the New Earth life style there will be no ministry. "Faith, hope, love abide" (vs. 13). Giving is ever the expression of love. So sharing and service will ever be the content of a love environment. But the present "gifts" end with the end of present needs. Any suggestions as to what social needs there will be and how these will be served in the New Earth would be speculative. But there will be ministry. Souls "redeemed and cleansed from sin" will have all their "noble powers dedicated to the service of God."¹ Whatever that service is, and through whatever gifts it will be ministered, love will be the basis of the relationship.

This paper began with a presentation of the Holy Spirit coming to indwell the human heart. That privilege is limited to those who accept His offer. But "from eternal ages it was God's purpose that . . . man should be a temple for the indwelling of the

¹White, Steps to Christ, p. 126.

Creator."¹ Since God is love, when this eternal purpose is again fully realized, then love will be the motivation of every life. Those who fulfill their mission as members of Christ's body will join with all creation and in "unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."²

To prepare people for that experience, God gave spiritual gifts.

¹White, Desire of Ages, p. 161.

²Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 678.

PART TWO

THE REPORT OF A PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR THE
UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
SPIRITUAL GIFTS BY A
LOCAL CONGREGATION

CHAPTER VI

A BACKGROUND SERIES AT PRAYER MEETING

The pastor finds in the Wednesday evening prayer meetings an opportunity for a special type of learning experience for the church. Most members see this service as a more optional one than that held on Sabbath morning. Thus the attendants are usually those who come because of a special interest in the program. The informal atmosphere lends to an environment where communication is more responsive. Group interaction is higher, and informal, weekly format is conducive to the presentation of an extended series of studies.

As part of the plan to introduce a study of spiritual gifts to the church at Galt, a prayer-meeting series was prepared and presented as a study of 1 Corinthians. This letter of Paul's to the Corinthians was chosen because it deals extensively with the subject of spiritual gifts in chapters 12, 13, and 14. However, it was felt that an adequate understanding of these specific chapters could be enhanced by gaining an insight into the church at Corinth as it is presented in the rest of the epistle. Therefore, rather than being specific to the doctrine, the set of lessons functioned as

background and foundation for the subject of spiritual gifts. Several points during the course of study, however, were useful directly on "gifts."

The lessons were presented in a classroom format rather than a homiletical style. A chalkboard was regularly used. Outlines of the material covered were prepared and duplicated. These were given to those attending.¹

The series of lessons began on July 5 and concluded on October 16, 1978. Except for a couple interruptions, it covered every Wednesday evening during that period. The average attendance was between thirty and fifty. Just about half of the membership was present for at least one of the lessons in the series.

Summary of the Lessons

An attempt was made to divide the material at natural points. These sometimes, but not necessarily, came at chapter divisions. An emphasis frequently used in the series was to notice the similarities between the Corinthian church and the seventh-day Adventist church of today. One idea given special attention appeared in 1 Cor 1:5-8. Paul's appeal there was that those "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" are to be confirmed and blameless in that day and are to "come behind in no gift" (KJV).

¹See Appendix E for example.

The lessons in the series can be summarized briefly as follows:

1. The series began with a background study on the history of the city of Corinth and the beginning of the church there. Paul's work, as given in Acts 18, was covered. A map study was used to orient the students to the location.
2. The second lesson studied chapter one of the epistle. It introduced the letter and discussed Paul's authorship and the circumstances surrounding the writing of the letter.
3. This lesson covered 1 Cor 2:1 to 3:3. It was concerned with Paul's description of his evangelistic concepts and his understanding of the three types of responses that people make to the gospel, i.e., spiritual, natural, and carnal.
4. Paul's definition of his work covered the scripture portion from 3:4 to 4:21. Here Paul was seen under such figures as a member of an evangelistic team, a craftsman building a house, a steward, and a spiritual father.
5. Chapter 5 supplied the topic of how the church should relate to the problem of immorality within its membership. Illustrations and evaluations of modern church discipline responses were used as case studies.
6. The lesson in chapter 6 was titled "Lawsuits and Lifestyles." The first section noted the issues in

Paul's day and compared it with the current issue in the Adventist church, including the matter of the recent General Conference concern on lawsuits. The second part examined the various reasons Paul listed for the Christian to live a moral life.

7. Chapter 7 was presented as "Questions on marriage and related issues in view of the soon coming of Christ." The question of asceticism was noted. The implications of Paul's "crisis counseling" were considered. Discussion concerning Paul's comments on the subject of marriage was encouraged. I shared some interpretations on Paul's statements from different commentaries.

8. In the eighth session we studied two separate portions: 1 Cor 8:1-13 and 10:14 to 11:1. The outline was headed, "of Foods and Idols."

Background on living in the pagan world, as given in Barclay's commentary¹ was shared. This framed the setting for the issues of foods offered to idols. The question of eating was viewed from various relationships: that to one's own conscience, to fellow church members, and to non-Christians.

As a learning exercise, members present were asked to write a list of current issues seen as being

¹William Barclay, The Letters to the Corinthians (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), pp. 83-84.

related to the counsel given. These issues were discussed by the class.

9. Chapter 9 was treated as a separate study on "The freedom to give up rights." The key point seen here was, "Liberty is never to be a stumbling block to others."

Verses 4-13 were considered as a section under "Apostolic privilege and provision." Paul's several illustrations were listed. Paul presented the need for adaptability and the need to exercise self-control as vital to this Christian interrelationship.

10. "Of hairs and prayers" was the title given to the study on chapter 11:1-16. I found useful here the paper by J. Duncan Derrett, Studies in the New Testament, volume 1, pp. 171-173 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977).

My plan here was to present Paul's statement in the cultural setting of the time. It was important, I suggested, to try to grasp the man/woman relationship in terms of the culture of Paul's day and compare it with our own, and then to consider both cultures in the light of God's ideal. A discussion of the place for church and school standards in the area of dress codes sought to transfer principles to modern times. Among the issues introduced by the group were current trends in hair styles and questions about women wearing pant suits to church on Sabbath.

11. The setting for this study on the agape feast came from chapter 11:17-34. We first noticed some of the problems that were troubling the church at Corinth relating to this custom. Next we studied the comments Paul made about the purpose of the communion service. The lesson closed with the review of the results which Paul saw in the misuse of the communion and his concern for self-examination.

12. "What about the resurrection?" was the next subject dealing with chapter 15. The presentation was made with the use of verses 1-11 as Paul's introduction to the topic. Verses 12-34 were seen as Paul dealing with some questions being asked about Christ's resurrection. In verses 37-57 questions relating to the resurrection of the sleeping Christians were covered.

13. Chapter 16 made up the material for the closing study in the series. Here the evidence of Paul's wide area of concern was seen. In the beginning of the chapter Paul recommended a plan of systematic benevolence for Christian stewards. His hopes and plans for future work were shared in vss. 5-9.

The social personality of Paul came through in the middle of this chapter as he shared special comments on fellow workers and friends. We discussed the matter of teamwork in the service of Christ today and how friendships can be meaningful.

Some Observations

In the series discussed above, chapters 12, 13, and 14 were missing. These were omitted from the Wednesday evening meetings because they were used to form the basis for three Sabbath sermons that dealt specifically with spiritual gifts. These are discussed in chapter VII. Using 1 Cor 12, 13, and 14 in Sabbath sermons was a useful opportunity to remind the prayer meeting class of the significance of 1 Corinthians to the doctrine of "gifts."

One of the observations which I mentioned frequently, was the recognition that while the Corinthian church had many problems, some very serious, they were still seen as God's church. Paul addressed them as "saints." Like the letter to the church at Laodicea in Rev 3, this letter gave rebuke on the basis of God's love for them. The challenge to the Corinthian church, and to modern Laodicea, was to behave as the body of Christ, and as members of that body to use the various gifts for ministry on His behalf.

Recognition of problems within the Adventist church of today, we noted in our Wednesday studies, was not to be used as a call for rejection of that church. Instead, Paul noted twice in his epistle (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19), that the body, both individually and as a congregation, is to be seen as God's dwelling place for His

indwelling Spirit. This should be a great incentive for the body, either as an individual or as a congregation, to be cleansed from sin and impurity. Then, Paul contended, the operation of the Spirit through the means of spiritual gifts could be demonstrated. Thus failures in the church are turned to an appeal to recognize spiritual gifts and accept their operation that the church pattern of life and mission might be changed.

Such were the lessons I hoped to inculcate in the presentation of this series in prayer meeting. In that way the lessons would serve a supportive role in the learning program for spiritual gifts and would fulfill a pastoral service in church nurture as well.

CHAPTER VII

PRESENTING SPIRITUAL GIFTS BY PREACHING

The Sabbath morning worship service is seen as an experience in which the congregation meets corporately with God. The fellowship must be more than member to member. It must be member with member coming to God. God must not only be spoken to but must also be allowed to do some speaking.

The challenging call of the preacher is to be the agent by whom God speaks. In the person of the preacher the sermon must be experiential. But it must be more. It must also be propositional. Searching the written Word, the preacher is to find in his understanding of that Word God's message for the particular congregation addressed on a particular day. So the accomplishment of the goal will be dependent upon the preacher's sensitivity to the Spirit of God as well as to the heart needs of his people.

I mention this concept of preaching here because before I dared to use the worship service to present sermons on spiritual gifts I had to be clear in my own mind that this was not just the promotion of an academic exercise. Convinced that this doctrine was indeed a

legitimate message of God and that its presentation would fulfill a genuine need in my people, I saw the sermon as a vital vehicle to utilize here.

When planning the sermons for the church schedule, I decided it would be best not to give them in an unbroken series. Instead, they were slotted into the calendar over a period of several months. I preferred to have the people find these insights in a milieu of many other preaching areas rather than in isolation.

The following schedule was developed:

August 19, 1978	"Walking with the Spirit"
September 2	"The Baptized Body"
September 9	"Looking for the Spirit-filled Person"
September 16	"Everybody Needs a Body"
October 7	"A Call to Intelligent Worship"
October 14	"The More Excellent Way"
November 18	"Designing a Quality Church"
December 30	"Your Mission for Seventy-nine"
February 10, 1979	"Ministering God's Grace"

Summaries of the Sermons

To acquaint the reader with the approach, content, and style of the sermons involved in this project, a brief review of each one is given here.

As substantiated in section one of this report, I have a deep conviction that the doctrine of spiritual

gifts must be rooted in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. To establish this foundation, the first three sermons here were designed to investigate the relationship of the Spirit to people.

Sermon 1. "Walking with the Spirit"

This was an expository sermon based on Rom 8. The sermon's proposition was that the "Holy Spirit serves us" on behalf of Christ.

The Rom 8 passage was presented as a key source of Biblical material on the Holy Spirit, for He is referred to at least eighteen times in the chapter. I contended that the early chapters of Romans tended to concentrate on justification. This chapter now deals with the other side of God's salvation plan and speaks of the operation of the Spirit in the life to work out experientially what Christ has already done for the Christian by His sacrifice. The sermon assumed an intimate tie between Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The outline had three divisions.

- I. The Holy Spirit serves to deliver us (vss. 1-11).
 - A. He delivers us from condemnation.
 - B. He delivers us from the inability to obey God.
 - C. He delivers us from death.
- II. The Holy Spirit serves to adopt us (vss.

12-25).

III. The Holy Spirit serves to intercede for us
(vss. 26-30).

It was noted that the emphasis at the beginning of the chapter was about the Spirit, and the emphasis at the end of the chapter was about Christ. So in the Christian life, it is the Spirit who points to Jesus, the important One for the Christian. A summary pointed out that the chapter begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation.

The appeal asked for a standing response to signify a rededication to walk with the Spirit.

Sermon 2. "The Baptized Body"

This sermon was planned to demonstrate a close identification of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ. It introduced the "body" concept by noticing the unity within the Godhead as expressed in 1 Cor 12 and Eph 4. The "body" metaphor was used again in a later sermon.

The main structure of the sermon consisted of five vignettes from the life of Christ. Each of these had to do with either the Spirit in Christ's life or His anticipation of the Spirit's work to represent Him in His followers.

The five scenes were: the annunciation of the angel to Mary of One to be born to her of the Spirit, John's baptism of Jesus at the Jordan, the last supper

with Jesus giving the extended announcement of the coming Spirit, the Sunday evening reunion as He breathed upon them, and His farewell promise made on the Mount of Olives, of the Spirit power to come.

The conclusion depicted the disciples returning to Jerusalem from the ascension scene. In an imaginary conversation among the disciples they saw the baptized followers of Christ ministering in His place as "His baptized body."

Sermon 3. "Looking for the Spirit-filled Person"

The purpose for preaching this sermon was to point out that the New Testament sees the Spirit-filled life as normative for the Christian. The sermon's proposition argued that "when Jesus works His way in a baptized person by the service of the Holy Spirit, that person is spoken of as a Spirit-filled person." This sermon, presented in three divisions, was topical in format and was supported by a number of scriptural references.

I. The event of Pentecost

The sermon began with a look at the experience of the persons central to the Pentecost event. It was suggested that these had surrendered themselves to God to such an extent that the Spirit could now come into their lives in a more complete manner and be allowed to fully direct them. It was noted that the event was tied

to the heavenly celebration of Christ's coronation.

II. Being filled with the Holy Spirit

This section quickly explored the book of Acts to point out examples of persons who were spoken of as "Spirit-filled" people. What did this mean? The term was considered parallel with the phrase "baptized with the Holy Spirit." These persons had made a decision to belong to Christ; therefore the Holy Spirit was allowed to be the supervising agent in their life. This "Spirit-filled" experience was a demonstration of a process we call "sanctification."

III. The promise is for us

The sermon concluded with the assurance that being Spirit-filled, that is, baptized with the Holy Spirit, is God's plan for all His people during the entire Christian era--not just for some mystical first-century group. In fact, it is God's imperative for the Christian (Eph 5:18). Yet this is not a once-for-all event; it is a continuous event. It can be illustrated by the steady pressure of the wind in filling the sail of a boat and keeping it moving. A "repeat-after-me" prayer was used as an appeal for each church member (or listener) to seek such an infilling of the Spirit in daily living.

The next three sermons were all from the book of 1 Corinthians. These dealt specifically with the

doctrine of spiritual gifts.

Sermon 4. "Everybody Needs a Body"

First Corinthians 12 is the basic source of my concept of spiritual gifts. Not only does it include two of Paul's "gift" lists, but it develops most completely Paul's frequently used illustration of the human body as a type of the church. This chapter formed the preaching portion for the fourth sermon.

The aim of the sermon was to present the essential need for the balancing features of unity and diversity. Paul uses the human body to vividly show that while the body must have a variety of organs, the function of that body depends upon all of the organs complementing each other for the total operation of the organism. Modern medical insights were used to enhance the illustration. The holistic view of a healthy body is dependent upon understanding the unique function of the myriad cells and systems, it was stated.

So it is with the church. It can fulfill its purpose only when the membership consists of different persons with unique gifts. To assume that only those who seem outstanding and spectacular are to work, while the seemingly common members remain uninvolved, would lead to failure and the collapse of the church as an organism.

The church is the body of Christ. Early in the

sermon we had agreed that each human lives in full health and purpose only as the various, interdependent systems function to support the common life. So Christ's mission needs the church body to bring all its diverse personalities, each with its special abilities, into a smoothly operating union. Everybody needs a body. And it is through the distribution of spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit enables and empowers the church to operate as this body.

The appeal for unified involvement came in the telling of the story of an A.W.O.L. military man who hid in the attic of an Adventist church for six weeks. To be in the church is not necessarily to be of the body.

Sermon 5. "The Call to Intelligent Worship"

In a discussion of spiritual gifts with an Adventist congregation, the question of tongues usually arises. It was not part of this project to deal in detail with glossolalia as an issue. However, it is an issue in 1 Cor 14, which is part of Paul's extended discussion on gifts. Therefore it seemed proper to include that chapter in the Biblical survey of "gifts."

When studying the chapter homiletically, I found that the passage sets up a contrast of attitude and interest among the Corinthian members at worship. To illustrate these attitudes, Paul chose to speak about

two "gifts"--prophecy and tongues. Prophesying, which here seems to include exhortation, makes a rational approach. Tongues, on the other hand, Paul says, are more subject to emotional misuse. They are often interpreted improperly and, consequently, are ineffective for edification.

The sermon, which was presented in three steps, progressed under the posposition that God confronts people in worship through their intellect.¹

1. The value of intelligent worship is illustrated in a contrast between the content of prophecy and that of tongues. Ten items describing each of the gifts were noted in the chapter.

2. The purpose of intelligent worship is to bring edification. Then the church is built in quality and quantity.

3. The manner of intelligent worship is seen in orderliness.

A summary appeal used the following comment:

Ignorance does not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve Him intelligently.²

¹See Appendix F.

²Ellen G. White, Counsels to Parents and Teachers (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943), p. 361.

Sermon 6. "The More Excellent Way"

Chapter thirteen of 1 Corinthians is an essential part of the spiritual-gift teaching in the Bible. The sermon from that chapter proposed that "love supplementing gifts is the more excellent way."

Corinth was a gifted church. But it was also in deep trouble. Paul's diagnosis was that the church had overlooked the essential aspect of love in the operation of its gifts. Following that introduction, the expository sermon moved under three simple heads:

- I. Love verifies the "gifts"
- II. Love protects the "gifts"
- III. Love outlasts the "gifts"

It concluded with the reading of the chapter with the substitution of the name "Jesus" for the word "love" in the text.

Sermon 7. "Designing a Quality Church"

Chapter four of Ephesians must be included in the scriptural passages presenting spiritual gifts. In preparing a sermon for this chapter, I chose the first sixteen verses as the preaching portion. It seemed important to include a wide context as a basis for Paul's position here. An expository style was used.

At the time this sermon was to be given, the church at Galt was scheduled for involvement in a study of church-growth concepts. It was planned that this

sermon might incorporate the understanding of "gifts" in its proper place in the church-growth emphasis. The structure is as follows:

I. A quality church is a united church (vss. 2-6).

II. A quality church is a gifted church (vss. 7-12).

III. A quality church is a growing church (vss. 13-16).

Using a mnemonic device I suggested that the three subpoints of the third division--the growing church-- could be remembered as "the three ships." I said, "The body grows in fellowship, stewardship, and membership."

A short statement, used as a conclusion, said, "The real character of the church is measured . . . by the number of her persevering, faithful workers."¹

Sermon 8. "Your Mission for Seventy-nine"

The last worship service of 1978 had as its theme the coming New Year. The sermon was not a formal homiletical presentation. Instead, the more casual approach of a teaching style was followed. An overhead projector was used to present a summary of twelve basic points that reviewed the lessons on spiritual gifts that

¹Ellen G. White, "Scattered Churches," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald (6 September 1881):161.

I had been sharing with the congregation during the previous months. I suggested that the lessons were not to be considered merely as theoretical material but were to be understood as structural supports the congregation could use to move ahead in a church-growth experience during the New Year. I wanted the people to feel that spiritual gifts were to be recognized and used in everyday living as a continual ministry within the church and radiating out from the church.

The morning service ended with a progressive threefold appeal to a dedication for the church mission in 1979. The three "calls" made to the congregation were (1) a rededication of mind and body (raise hands), (2) a seeking to know and to use their spiritual gifts (stand), and (3) a willingness to be channels for God's love (come forward). Nearly everyone responded to all three decisions. Standing at the front of the sanctuary the congregation responded in the singing of the hymn, "O, Master, Let Me Walk with Thee."

Sermon 9. "Ministering God's Grace

The concluding sermon of the group (as far as this project was concerned) relating to spiritual gifts was preached on February 10, 1979. It was developed from the scripture in 1 Pet 4:7-11. The New International Version was used as the translation. In addition to its review value, this sermon also provided

an opportunity to share the topic of spiritual gifts with some who had recently joined the congregation and had missed many of the earlier presentations.

The sermon was introduced by reminding the listeners of recent experiences which demonstrated the movement of events toward the end time. This provided focus on the first phrase of the text, "the end of all things is at hand." The question proposed was, How should Adventists live in the end time?

Verse nine was suggested as the nucleus of the passage. The text suggests two basic concepts on the importance of gifts which contains an answer to the initial question. These point out that (each one has received a "gift" from God, and (2) each one is to use his "gift" for administering God's grace.

The third point of the text suggests five areas of "gifts" where opportunities to minister God's grace might be discovered. These are praying, healing (by love), sharing, speaking, and serving. Each area was developed and illustrated. The sermon closed with a rereading without further comment of the entire portion of scripture.

Summary of the Sermon Program

These nine sermons, spread over a six-month period, were seen as a major instrument for bringing the Biblical concept of spiritual gifts to the congregation.

While the sermon does not have the concentrated impact of a small-group dynamic, it does carry a strong spiritual influence to the members of a congregation. It is admitted that the details of most individual sermons are soon forgotten as following weeks add new insights. So their usefulness tends to be for immediate inspiration rather than for long-range structural content of belief. As the nutrients of a particular meal energize the body for only a few hours, regular, carefully planned food intake does provide for measurable long-range health. So it can be true that the cumulative effect of a sermon series does lead to concept development and character modification. This will be illustrated in the later chapter on evaluation.

CHAPTER VII

SPIRITUAL GIFT SEMINARS

The first opportunity to present the topic of spiritual gifts in a practical setting came through an assignment for the course CHMN 740, Pastoral Nurture and Religious Education, directed by Dr. Don Jacobsen. Elder J. D. Westfall, pastor of the Eau Claire and Coloma, Michigan, churches, kindly allowed me to work with his congregations on the Sabbath of May 20, 1978.

I preached at both churches that morning. The sermon on 1 Cor 12, "Everybody Needs a Body," was used. The seminar itself was a two-hour afternoon session. Handouts had been prepared and were used as the primary teaching tools. One was a sheet on profiles of the Biblical data on "gifts," with blanks to be filled in. The second was an investigation of the four basic "gift" lists by Paul. The third was an identification exercise. This contained lead questions which were designed to help the participants recognize their own gifts. Those present were to respond privately to the questions. Then the conclusions were shared in small groups. The fourth handout was an evaluation sheet designed to benefit my study.

This introductory session served to clarify how a similar study could be conducted in my own church at Galt. One problem that became apparent was that the time span was too short for the material being used. It was also obvious that the handouts needed some refinement.

The First Seminar for Galt

The first spiritual-gift seminar for my home church was scheduled for Sabbath afternoon, September 23, 1978. By this time the congregation was becoming well aware of my work on the subject. Several aspects of the topic had been covered in morning sermons and the prayer-meeting series was well under way.

On September 14, a letter of invitation was sent to thirty officers and leaders.¹ The letter summarized my project and stated my dependence upon their involvement with me. It gave details about the meeting and what they might expect. Twenty-four responded. The chosen group represented a broad spectrum of membership, including academy students and senior-citizen adults.

I decided to use basically the same handouts, with some revisions, as those used in Michigan.² This made possible response comparisons. The main change in format was to increase the time to three hours.

There was also a physical difference. In Michigan the group had been seated in the pews of the church.

¹Appendix C.

²Appendix D.

For the fall seminars in Galt we used a classroom facility in nearby Lodi Academy. This also had the advantage of providing a new environment separate from the home church. The classroom was better suited to group dynamics. School desks were grouped in islands of four facing common centers. The grouping was made by participants' choice and held for the full session. A wall chalkboard was available.

I was also aware of a more subtle change. In Michigan I had come in as a stranger for the day. With the Galt class, I was the pastor closely involved with all of them. As such, I felt more comfortable.

The meeting began with a brief introduction on the purpose of the session, an expression of my appreciation for their coming, and an invocation.

First, we tried to activate intra-group relationships. This was done by sharing experiences on "the most valuable item in my purse or wallet." All of the groups seemed to accept involvement in this exercise. After ten minutes there was a brief summary of responses with the entire assembly.

Following this exercise there was a seven-minute introduction where the question of spiritual gifts as it relates to the Seventh-day Adventist church was stated. The activity then moved directly into the Bible study on gifts. The thirty-minute study used the

profile sheets that had been designed for it. A short recess followed.

After the break, the handout containing the "gift" lists was distributed. This was a comparison of the four main lists that Paul gives in his epistles naming specific areas of spiritual ministry. The lists are found in Rom 12, 1 Cor 12, and Eph 4. The aim was to note variety and/or repetition as well as to consider other gifts that might be appropriate to such a list. Ten minutes were allowed for private study, fifteen for comparing insights within the small groups, and another fifteen for sharing with the entire assembly. Discussion on this topic was enthusiastic.

The "gift"-identification exercise came next. That was considered the most important exercise of the afternoon and also carried the highest anxiety potential. The handout for this exercise had been revised since the Michigan session, but it used the same format of introspective questions designed to help the participants gain an awareness of the Spirit's guidance in their lives. The climax of this activity was to aid each person to state specifically what he or she saw in his or her life as an ability that could be called a spiritual gift.

Before beginning the identification exercise, the members were given a brief stand-up break. This moved

into a short devotional experience designed to create a mood change to a more serious atmosphere for the next period. The song "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" was sung. Each group was asked to function as a prayer band, praying especially for spiritual insight on the matter of personal recognition of the Spirit's leading. While the members sat quietly with closed eyes I read 1 Cor 13 from the New International Version.

The outline for this identification exercise gave about fifteen minutes for each person to work alone. Then group members seeking insights, responses, and confirmations from one another, expressed their personal convictions. Members were obviously more subdued at this point than in the earlier activities. Every group was working. But there were indications that some were reluctant to fully expose personal convictions about one's "gift." It was also evident that many were consciously trying to be very supportive of fellow team members. Before this exercise closed, some time was taken with the full assembly to share in a more general way what had been taking place and the degree of involvement that had been reached.

At this session a special assignment was requested of those in attendance. The church nominating committee had just been chosen. An alphabetical list of the names of all active church members was distributed.

Each name was followed by a blank space. I asked those present to choose about ten names of persons with whom they were well acquainted and to state what "gift" they recognized in that person. It was emphasized that whatever ability for service was recognized, it was to be stated in terms of a "gift" rather than an office. The sheets were collected and were later made available to the nominating committee as data for its work.

Just before the close of the afternoon meeting, participants were asked to respond to the afternoon program by completing an evaluation sheet for me. One of the elders present led in the benediction.

Some Conclusions

When comparing this seminar with the one in Michigan, I found that my own involvement was more comfortable. Working with a group I knew was one factor. Another was the sense of greater competency due to additional time for better preparation in the subject. The classroom location also provided a preferable environment for the activities.

The program moved smoothly. I did sense that the anxiety level increased among those involved during the identification exercise. I may have been somewhat responsible for this by saying too much about it. I had mentioned in the introduction to that exercise that it would demand exposure of personal insights with the

group. I felt that a public recognition of this factor would be important. But I may have indicated my anxiety for them which then increased their distress.

The earlier part of the session was marked by a high degree of joviality and camaraderie. In reflecting on this, I wondered if this may have indicated some nervousness among those present right from the start. Some of them confessed later that they had come with uncertainty--as well as a strong sense of curiosity--as to just what would be happening.

Many acknowledged that the devotional and the prayer time after the second break was effective in setting a more spiritual tone.

The evaluation sheets, which were anonymous, indicated appreciation for the program and strong interest in continuing emphasis on gifts in the church. Practically everyone confirmed the sense of anxiety which I had suspected during the identification activity. Yet none criticized its goal or suggested that it be removed. Some gave suggestions about refinements in the materials.

I have been asked about the rationale for limiting the afternoon seminar to a selected group. My first reason was that I see some church members as leaders. These may have a major office or may be leaders by virtue of their personalities and involvement. I believe

it is important, as the pastor-administrator of the church, to seek to use the priority influence that these have. It is easier to develop a concept and find acceptance for a program with such a select group than with the whole church. Once leaders adopt the ideas, they will give support to wider coverage and will be instrumental in its promotion.

Then too, the afternoon programs demanded a heavy concentration of mental energy from those taking part. There were some in the church who were not able to do the work expected during the three-hour sessions. The program also was predicated on a mature spiritual experience. Some who were careless or indifferent might have felt threatened by the demands or would have neutralized the positive tone I wished to maintain. I preferred not to have present any who by attitude or action might handicap the study.

A second local seminar was held on October 7, 1978. This group of twenty-three members was led through a program very similar to the first one. Again the invitation to participate came from me, but there were some who were accepted because they had requested to attend after hearing reports from those who had participated in the earlier session.

The response at both sessions was much alike. In neither case were there any negative reactions. The

identification exercise, as before, was the difficult portion. Several volunteered the conviction that they planned to continue to seek additional insights about the Spirit's direction in their lives.

CHAPTER IX

SOME NON-PUBLIC IMPLEMENTATIONS

In addition to the public presentations on spiritual gifts, such as the Sabbath morning sermons, other avenues were open to me, as the pastor, for congregational communication. These included sending out letters and using private, family, and small-group interviews or visits. Since these are important aspects of my regular pastoral ministry, it seemed natural to utilize them for the spiritual-gifts project.

An Introductory Letter and Questionnaire

Upon my return from the 1978 spring quarter at Andrews University, I shared with the church my plans to present a teaching program on spiritual gifts as my project for the Doctor of Ministry degree requirements. This information was announced to individuals in personal contacts, to the elders in meeting, to the church board, and in a statement on Sabbath morning.

The first mailed notice of intention was a one-page, "help wanted" supplement that went with the July Update, the monthly church newsletter. This was designed to give an awareness of my project to the church, to

arouse an interest in it, and, particularly, to solicit a response to a questionnaire soon to be sent out to a "select group." The newsletter circulates to all members, including some who are inactive, some who no longer hold membership, some relatives of members, some neighbors, and some who are on the church interest list.

The questionnaire¹ and a return, self-addressed, stamped envelop were sent July 26 by first-class mail to 158 persons. This "selected group" consisted of all baptized individuals on the church membership list except those who (1) were living out of the area and could not participate in local activities, (2) were infirm and ill to the extent that they could seldom come to services, and (3) were apparently in a loss-of-interest state so that they seldom participated in the church life.

The questionnaire consisted of four stapled sheets. An introduction explained briefly the reason for the questionnaire being sent and instructions on how to indicate one's responses. Though the reply was to be anonymous, the page did request information by categories as to age, length of time in the church, and extent of education in Adventist schools.

I had several goals in mind for the questionnaire. First, like the announcement letter, I hoped it would generate interest among the membership about the subject

¹Appendix B.

of spiritual gifts. But I especially hoped it would be a useful instrument to gain a profile of the attitude and understanding of the members about the spiritual-gifts doctrine. I also saw the possibility of repeating the test at the end of the program to provide a before-and-after comparison.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first had twenty-one agree/disagree statements. The response options could be expressed by a check mark in one of five degrees: fully agree, mostly agree, not sure, mostly disagree, and fully disagree. The second part had twelve statements which were to be completed by a choice of one of five options. In each case one answer represented the position which I would be presenting later. Other answers might represent an opposite position or a degree of importance. Both sets of statements had a built-in value system for grading on a scale of one to five.

Many members mentioned the questionnaire to me during the week after its mailing. Some, apparently, did so just to indicate that they were aware of it, some to ask questions, and some, it seemed, to vent a bit of apprehension about the assignment.

It was encouraging to note on the return forms that some were voluntarily including their names to let me know of their interest in and encouragement for the

project. A few forms were returned with the notation that the assignment was too difficult; this was an option provided for in the instructions. One came back with a notation critical of the whole idea. A total of 128 forms were finally returned.

Further observations will be given in the chapter on evaluation.

The Nominating Committee

As mentioned earlier in the report, one exercise was to evaluate ten friends in the church membership list as to their perceived gift. These data were presented to the nominating committee as resource materials.

When the members of the committee were first chosen, I went to each one privately and gave a copy of the same membership list. I spent time in this visit to explain in some detail my understanding of spiritual gifts as they related to service in the church. Their willingness to attempt to put the concept into operation in the coming task was solicited. They were asked to go through the entire list of members and to try to recognize, for as many as possible, some indication of a gift that person might have been given. At this point no attempt was to be made to think in terms of the church offices to be filled. It was only to recognize abilities for some broad area of Christian service.

When I met with these persons a few days later

in their first committee session, I was pleased to find that all had taken the request seriously. Some had done more than others, but all had worked at it. At this meeting I appealed to them to work under a consciousness of partnership with the Holy Spirit by which He would be allowed to influence the decisions. They were also encouraged to use spiritual-gifts terminology when approaching members to accept responsibility. For instance, a member might be approached with: "The nominating committee has been impressed that God has given to you the gift of being able to understand and love small children. Therefore, we would like you to pray and see if God confirms to you our decision to have you appointed as the kindergarten leader for the next year."

It was further suggested to them that they use no pressure or manipulation to get an office filled. They should give the invitations and see it as the Lord's responsibility to bring conviction. If some offices were left unfilled, then so be it. If the Holy Spirit recognized a need for a function in the church, it was He who must give the gift to the one of His choice and the conviction to use it. This idea was regarded as a bit radical for a pastor to present, but they were willing to follow it.

At the close of their work the group admitted they had been very comfortable with this approach.

Their job had become more spiritual and less mechanical. One particular office, that of communications secretary, was left vacant because none of those invited would accept. A few weeks into the new year, an individual was baptized who had a background of working in news media; he volunteered to fill the office.

Sabbath School Teaching

In evaluating my own experience as a member of the church body, I have recognized as my spiritual gift, the ability to give organization and exposition to Biblical material. This has been confirmed by members of this church and by others even before I began to study the subject of gifts. But since learning more of the gift doctrine, I have felt the need to utilize this in more ways.

It seems appropriate to include one area in this report--Sabbath School teaching. This is not just teaching a class myself. I see as more important my job of supporting and training others in the church who have found a call to teach Sabbath School. For that reason one priority each week is the teacher's meeting. This I have been leading for several quarters. My goal there is not to give them informational material on the lesson. Most already have too much "to tell." Instead, I try to give those present insights into the Scriptural passages, to suggest aims for the class in both learning

and practice, to prioritize what will be presented in thirty minutes, and to share sample outlines on how to package the lesson. Thus I am not only using my spiritual gift, but, hopefully, I am demonstrating the concept to others.

Very appropriate to my project was the timing of the lesson topics for the 1978 fourth quarter--the Holy Spirit. It was very natural for my direction of the teacher's training sessions that quarter to have a number of areas where my implementation of the gifts doctrine could be supported. While my suggestions to the teachers are always optional and never mandatory, in recognition of their own freedom to teach as they are led to do, the classes of that quarter did provide an excellent extension of what my project was seeking to do. So the weekly Sabbath School lessons, coming from several lay teachers, gave an additional dimension that my own public preaching would not cover.

Summary Letter to the Church

By the middle of February 1979, I had completed the basic presentations that had been planned for the church. Now a new emphasis encouraged by the conference started in the congregation, of church growth. Since gifts form a facet of that concern, some continuing review of gifts was being given.

At this time a detailed summary letter was mailed

to all the members.¹ I reminded them of my project with its goals for myself and for them. I told them that I hoped this might be a statement that some of them would choose to keep as a reference for later review.

The letter listed the nine sermons on spiritual gifts, with the dates, key texts, and succinct comments that I had given at Galt. A paragraph reminded them about the prayer meeting series on First Corinthians. Mention was made of the two seminars and the nominating committee's use of the concept of gifts. A list of seven of the key Biblical passages that speak of spiritual gifts was included.

In the letter I shared my two concerns for presenting the topic: (1) that the expressions of spiritual gifts always be focused in an awareness of the Holy Spirit, since only a ministry under that consciousness would be effective for the finishing of the work, and (2) that spiritual gifts be not only a doctrine to accept but the outline of a pattern for life. The real test is in the practice.

The letter also notified them that I would soon visit with many of them to seek their evaluation of what we had been doing. I mentioned that a number of meaningful statements had come to my attention in a recent reading of the new Ellen White compilation, Mind,

¹Appendix G.



the programs, as well as those who had been involved in nearly every facet of the project. My primary consideration was to have a variety of positions included from among those who could recognize trends and honestly evaluate them.

Most of the visits were held in the home of the interviewee. Some were with a single individual, some with husband and wife together, and some included young people with their parents. The atmosphere, in every case, was set to be relaxed and informal. Those being questioned were given a copy of the evaluation form from which I was working. I made notes as they responded. In some cases, individuals requested permission to turn to the Bible to check a text. If they had it in mind and quickly found it, I felt that this was an appropriate measure of learning. Each interview closed with prayer.

The outline of the questionnaire began in the area of a general response to the project as a whole. Possible responses would be a basic unawareness of the project, a sense that it was not important, an intellectual acceptance of the material, or a response that included an experiential involvement in the teaching of the use of gifts in the church. There was also a probing to discover their awareness of content, both as to meaning and as to Biblical content. I asked if there

had been an attempt to identify a gift in their lives and, if so, what it was and to what extent was it being used.

They were asked to evaluate the program on the basis of what, if anything, they had seen happening in the church since the emphasis had begun. And, finally, they were asked to suggest possible routes for me to pursue in the church as far as additional materials and programs dealing with gifts were concerned.

The types of activities mentioned in this chapter are not seen to be more or less important than the more "public" programs described earlier. Instead, they are seen to be complementary. The pastor's work in the church must always seek a balance of a proper mix of these two services. To have such a proper mix for the development of the spiritual gift emphasis was my goal.

CHAPTER X

EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION

The proposal stated: "The ultimate value of the project will be sought in the congregational response to and their perceived growth from the programs presented."

Among the expectations listed in the proposal, three of them focused on congregational response. They were: (1) the congregation will mature in interpersonal relationships, (2) the congregation will find new spiritual factors in the operation of the church functions, and (3) the congregation will be more effective in witness. These three expectations have never been given to the church membership in terms of a promotion to be fulfilled. If they were to be seen as results, they were to be the natural dynamic of the outflow inherent in the doctrine of spiritual gifts in its practical application.

It seems important to remind the reader again that the question of subjectivity was noted in the previous chapter under the discussion of the interviews. A congregation's "perceived growth" is in no way to ignore

the importance of numerical growth. However, as every pastor discovers, size is not the ultimate factor in defining "a good church."

Instead, it is more important to feel the sense of an esprit de corps. It is this awareness that defines a positive "perception" on the part of the local church body. Care must be taken here that this "body spirit" is not just that of being "jolly good fellows." That may be just a secular value. But in a Christian church, this feel must be deeply spiritual, as found in the Biblical meaning of the koinonia. It is the fellowship of Christ's Holy Spirit. Therefore, the personal relationships within the body must always be in reference to the Head of that body. This evaluation is especially concerned with an attempt to measure this quality.

Some General Indications of Change

Informal signals have been received in recent months that indicate some genuine responses to the gifts presentations at Galt. One of these is in vocabulary. Each denomination has its own colloquialisms that mark it as parochial. It has been rewarding to hear some words come into daily usage within this membership that are not common in Adventist circles.

For instance, there is the word "gift." This is usually seen as the property of Pentecostal assemblies.

But many in this church are now using it. The only specific emphasis I gave for the word's use was at the afternoon seminars and in the nominating committee. But I have heard several instances where, in referring to an ability or a talent to be used in the church, the speaker talks of someone with a gift.

Another example is the term "ministry." I have usually found this word reserved for the formal denominational worker, usually of one ordained. The lay member has been seen as having "rendered a service" or "fulfilled a task" or "carried an office." But, in response to the study of Eph 4, I hear about my people "ministering" to someone.

These may not be major criteria for an evaluation. However, I see these as indications that the congregation has taken seriously the teachings of the project. This word change is evidence of a conceptual realignment that is becoming an accepted pattern of daily life.

Another more objective type of response is showing up in the formation of small groups oriented to developing spiritual growth. These have been spontaneous, for during this period I have purposely refrained from an administrative promotion of them. Some of these have been short-term sessions. Others seem to be set to go on for some time.

The specific goals are varied. Three teenagers from the academy wanted to learn new Bible study methods. A group of older members especially concerned for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit meet weekly. Some young wives with non-Adventist husbands, feel a need for giving better witness of Christ to their husbands. Young adult couples want more meaning in their religious outreach to neighbors. In each case, the "why did you start?" question was answered by a reference to impressions from the spiritual-gift emphasis.

A third response demonstration is noticed in the function of the Sabbath School classes. As a pastor, I have often tried to use the plan of directing church outreach by means of this class organization. Now, for the first time, I am seeing it work. The current Sabbath School superintendent has promoted it enthusiastically.

Her rationale for the plan, she says, is rooted in ideas coming out of our spiritual-gift study. In fact, she indicates she probably would not have accepted the invitation to lead out in that office except for her conviction of seeing this as a gift ministry in her life. She envisions the Sabbath School class, in a sense, as a sub-body of the church. Here members may support and complement each other, not just in the intellectual study on Sabbath morning, but especially in

social unions for fellowship through which they plan for a united thrust. In this concern she works closely with the church Lay Activities department. So far this year they have conducted a systematic contact plan for ex-members and have made neighborhood visitation schedules on behalf of the church missionary journals.

I realize that these projects are not original with this church. But in this particular case, officers identify the "gift" program as the incentive for developing the plans.

A Church Growth Survey

The Wednesday evening prayer-meeting series during March, April, and May of 1979 were dealing with church growth. Visual aid supplies prepared by Dr. Win Arn and others at the Church Growth Institute was part of the teaching resource material. This study includes the topic of spiritual gifts. However, the topic of church growth was chosen for its own purpose and not as an added promotion on "gifts."

One of the exercises used during the series was an attitude survey. At the meeting, following the giving of the questionnaire, the results were tabulated and discussed. Twenty-six persons had filled in the anonymous survey.

One question was specific on spiritual gifts. In completing the statement: "In using my 'gifts' in the work of Christ and my church, I _____," no one marked the option, "Don't know or care what my gifts are." Eight wanted more study on gifts. Ten said they would use their "gifts" if asked. And significantly, nine replied that they had "identified and am using my 'gifts'."

Other questions and responses are of interest here. All described their Christian life as average or above, none as below average. Twenty-two said that their devotional life was considered "most of the time" or "regular." Regarding the potential for church growth in the local congregation, six thought it was average; the rest, good or excellent. None marked the "poor" or "limited" options.

Since this survey was not intended to relate to this project, there is no way of knowing if these responses would have been the same a year earlier. However, the group did interpret them as showing a very healthy condition as of April 1979. It was significant that several did suggest it was their conviction that the spiritual gift studies were a strong factor in the positive feelings revealed. So the results do identify a "perceived growth."

Church-Member Response to Interviews

The previous chapter described the reasons and

method for the interviews that concluded the "spiritual-gifts" project with the congregation. The reporting of those responses has been left to this point. To assist in evaluating the perceptions listed, I remind the reader that thirty-six interviews were conducted.

The first question sought to locate responses in broad areas. None of those interviewed felt that the program was unimportant. Four confined their reaction to the intellectual understanding of the doctrine. But thirty-two said that in addition to a doctrinal understanding, they were also sincerely attempting to apply the principles to life. Of those, twenty-eight named a specific spiritual gift which they believed marked an area of ministry where they were called to serve. Many had shared this conviction with others. This was usually with a spouse, but sometimes it had been discussed with other members, usually in study groups.

I have felt that the intellectual content of a doctrinal presentation is an important structure to support a practice. One survey question attempted to discover the extent of this material content. Participants were asked to state Biblical sources, as specific as possible, and particular points of the doctrine as they recalled them. All had a difficult time with this question. Two could remember nothing significant. Ten stated one or two items, fourteen had three or four.

Ten persons named five or more specific texts or points on the doctrine of gifts.

The point of most frequent recall was 1 Cor 12 and the sermon "Everybody Needs a Body," which used Paul's illustration of the human body and its members as an illustration of the church and the operation of gifts. Fifteen persons listed this point. The second most frequently recalled scriptures were Eph 4 and 1 Cor 13.

The interviewees remembered content more easily than the text. Seven could think of no text of scripture. The idea most frequently noted was that spiritual gifts suggests a uniqueness and importance, under the Holy Spirit, for each person. The concern that the body is interdependent and that each has a serious responsibility to love and care for others was often recognized.

In response to "Which presentation was most helpful to you?" seventeen named the afternoon seminar. Of those who named a sermon, 1 Cor 12, on the body, and 1 Cor 13, on love, were most often mentioned.

People were more open than I had expected in response to stating what difference the study of spiritual gifts had made in their lives. Significant and typical are remarks like these:

"I am more willing to accept responsibility."

"I feel unique under God."

"God is working in me to do something special."

"I feel less guilty about not being able to do all things. I can prioritize."

"I felt a strong love response after the seminar."

"I have a new awareness of my need of the Holy Spirit."

"An awareness of the importance of small things."

"I had a low self-esteem, but now I see I am important in God's work."

"I am more aware of people and their needs."

"I am seeking the Holy Spirit" (an academy student).

"I am now talking to people about Christ and have started a Bible study."

"A different attitude."

A companion question asked what change, if any, they had seen, or expected to see, in the church because of the gift emphasis. Responses to this question were similar in attitude but not quite so specific as in the personal response. Some samples are as follows:

"People seem more willing to take responsibility than before."

"I see people working (in the church) now who never did before."

"People have told me they feel a new sense of responsibility."

"I was on the nominating committee and it (gift emphasis) was especially helpful."

"I felt it was recognized in our last baptism because so many had been involved in helping these new converts."

"In our Sabbath School class there seems to be a new freedom to speak out about feelings and relate to others."

"Being friendly now has a spiritual dimension" (another academy student).

"I know of people who are re-evaluating their church position because of the gift study."

"In the nominating committee I saw _____ accept his position because of the gift concept, when I know that before he had planned to turn it down because he was too busy."

"An improvement in spirituality."

The last question sought for suggestions as to what future emphasis on "gifts" should be made. Three had no suggestion. One couple replied, "Do you want an honest answer? We have had as much as we can understand. Go to other topics for awhile." They had not attended the seminar.

The others indicated that some emphasis on

"gifts" should be a continuing concern. Thirteen asked that more of the concentrated study-type events be scheduled. Several wanted "gift" instruction to be included with any church-growth program. Four wanted more sermons on "gifts." One suggested preparing something for the children. A young adult said that I must not overlook the elderly in letting them continue to feel a sense of value. One of the elders said, "Keep the emphasis on the Spirit's leading in our service for others. This is really timely. All need the understanding. Do not drop it now."

From the Pastor's View

Looking back at the project proposal from the perspective of a completed year, I feel a deep sense of reverence for the evidence of God's Spirit moving with His people, as revealed in the statements above. There is a sense of the church having grown both in Christian understanding and a caring relationship. That is rewarding.

But with that sense comes also the recognition that much of the apparent positive result has come in spite of some weak points in both the planning and execution of this program. The most accute sense of failure comes in connection with the questionnaire mailed out at the beginning of the church involvement. This negative value can be placed both on the instrument

itself as well as on the response of the congregation to it. Perhaps the latter is the result of the former. While the questionnaire was not essential to the project, a proper operation of such a tool could have been valuable in bringing more objectivity to the conclusions or in recognizing areas of weakness.

The problem could have been avoided if the questionnaire had been prepared earlier, perhaps while I was still at Andrews. That would have given opportunity for corrective input by others. It also could have made possible a field testing before it was used in the target church.

The problem was that the answers were all falling in one area of scores. This difficulty surfaced when I began to see that most of the people were marking the extreme positions, usually the preferred response. Thus there was missing a sufficient gradient by which any significant comparison could be made among units of the population, among various issues, or between a before and after stance. This was the primary reason why the questionnaire was not repeated at the conclusion of the program.

The second disappointment with the questionnaire was the response it engendered. Of the 158 forms mailed out, thirty were never returned. Of those that did return, some did not come back until six weeks after the

mailing. During that time a number of oral and written reminders were used.

It was at that time that I felt the only serious reluctance on the part of the church members to be involved with me in the project. I am not sure why this reluctance was present. Some members indicated that they felt they were being put on the spot, even though the responses were anonymous. Some felt that they must study to get the right answers, even though the questionnaire specifically stated that only their present understanding was wanted. Perhaps an important factor was inherent confusion which might have resulted from some wording that caused blockage to cooperation.

The residual value of the questionnaire to the total project, as far as the church is concerned, seems to be that it did serve as a means of getting attention for the project. And, of course, it did teach an important, though painful, lesson to the researcher.

On another point, it should be noted that one of the weaknesses apparent during the closing interviews was the lack of clear Biblical sources and principles in the minds of the members. Several identified the books where the source was found, some the chapter, but none could state a specific verse. And it was no encouragement to a pastor to find on occasional questioning that church members could do little better with such

basic Adventist doctrines as the Sabbath, the second coming, or the sanctuary.

I see a need here for Adventist members to be able to do more than be able to give a fair statement of the concept of a doctrine. They need to be able to demonstrate where that doctrine is supported in the Bible. At the time of the various presentations on spiritual gifts, those participating recognized the scriptural support. However, there should have been added, at intervals, opportunities for review, for drills, and for small-group study of the Bible so that members might have fixed the basic texts on the topic in their minds.

This suggests another recommendation on procedure. As far as I know, everyone who attended one of the afternoon seminars was pleased with the opportunity and the program. As noted above, one of their frequent recommendations was for future follow-up programs. Two decisions have come from that.

First, more of these sessions should have been provided for other members of the church. It was clear that those who did attend had a much better understanding of the subject and were especially more likely to identify a personal gift. With this decision, it must, of course, be remembered that not every person in a congregation is able to give the concentrated study that is

required for an intense study session.

Second, an advanced stage in the form of a second seminar could be planned for those who wanted to go beyond the first session in a prepared group-learning environment.

A comment on the sermons is also in order. The decision to utilize this pastoral instrument in the project was appropriate. The sermons were well received. Indications from members at the time of the presentation, as well as responses by those interviewed, support this claim. But it is important for a pastor to keep in mind the practical limits of what a sermon can be expected to accomplish. Often members with a concern for a topic, and seemingly the denominational leadership as well, suggest that an issue is cared for if a sermon is preached on the matter. This is not to reject preaching, for it is a divinely ordained plan. But a sermon can hardly be an in-depth learning experience. Its weakness lies in the passivity of the audience inherent in the lecture-type presentation. Listeners are usually in a relaxed mode, little response is demanded, and the broad spectrum that most of the congregations represent makes it difficult for the message to be focused sharply upon each mind.

The sermon does serve well as a medium of introduction to a topic. It should present new insight to

scripture. And it should always bring spiritual inspiration to the listener, for it is one of the tools of the Holy Spirit. So in evaluating the use of the sermons in this project, I feel that they served the purpose for which the sermon is useful. However, they were expected to carry too much of the load. More Bible study on gifts should have been provided by other means.

Beyond This Local Church

The last anticipated value named in the proposal was that in this project I might develop a program which would be of value for sharing with other local congregations.

At the time of this writing, one opportunity has come to test this expectation. Pastor Kenneth Gryte, of the Cloverdale church in the Northern California conference, invited me to conduct a spiritual-gift seminar for his congregation. This was done on March 23 and 24, 1979.

A Friday evening meeting was devoted to seeking a Spirit-related background. This study was based on Rom 8. The Sabbath morning sermon was the basic one on gifts from 1 Cor 12, "Everybody Needs a Body." A three-hour afternoon seminar followed. It was similar to the basic format I had used at Galt. However, the handout items had been revised.

My own evaluation was that the Friday evening

study was weak and seemed to lack focus, perhaps because the overhead transparencies prepared for the study did not seem to coordinate well with the outline. The sermon met its expectations well. Both my wife and Pastor Gryte confirmed these conclusions.

The afternoon session progressed well. The meeting was open to all by general invitation. There were a few who were not anticipating the serious style of work to be done, but most responded well with total attention involved in the activities.

The one point at which some disappointment was apparent was in identifying personal gifts. The participants did not object to the assignment but expressed concern that the time allotted was inadequate for the depth of searching needed. I recognized the validity of this observation.

My conclusion at the time was that one weekend may be inadequate for bringing "spiritual gifts" to a new group. Perhaps introducing the subject, with some of the basic concepts, should be the goal of the first presentation. A week later, after a period for reflection, a second session could be held with sufficient time for personal and small-group exploration of the "gift" identification.

Officers of the local conference have discussed the Cloverdale meeting with me. Some tentative ideas

were explored relative to future sessions at other places. The potential of presentations on spiritual gifts is especially related to the conference emphasis on church growth.

The remaining expectation to be mentioned is the one listed first on the proposal. This expressed the hope that the theological study on spiritual gifts will prove useful to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. That, of course, must mean more than just a local church. Whether this expectation has merit cannot be judged at this time and I make no claim for its fulfillment.

There have been some who have suggested that the material in section one be revised for publication or at least portions be adapted for use in a periodical. Until this time, I have felt no leading in that direction.

Other Questions to Explore

Other areas for exploration in the concept of spiritual gifts have been suggested during the development of this paper. The present study was founded in the New Testament, with particular concern for the Pauline comments as they related to the body metaphor of the church.

One of these other areas is the possible use of the spiritual-gift concept in the Old Testament. The

Hebrew mind was much aware of the involvement of Yahweh in directing His work in the world. It would seem likely that a man of Paul's Hebraic background would have had in mind some theological roots from his Old Testament study that gave source to his epistolary instruction. A search for such a complement to this study would be helpful.

Someone with skills in church history might find a challenge in looking for spiritual-gift concepts during the Christian centuries. Some of the materials dealing with the issue of glossolalia note periodic demonstrations of ecstatic utterances and related phenomena. However, these were usually in a fringe movement and led to excesses that brought reproach to the movement. But were there examples of a genuine "gift" experience that brought forth the fruits of love, nurture, and growth? When did the Pauline emphasis disappear? Did any of the medieval, non-Papal denominations, such as the Waldenses, speak of "gifts"? Did it reappear during the Reformation period with the rebirth of Biblical study? Answers here would be useful to a more adequate picture of spiritual gifts.

An outline series of studies for use as a curriculum in a school or church could prove valuable for the teaching of the "gifts" doctrine. The course content should be supplemented with laboratory activities.

I would encourage other congregations to plan for study and utilization of the spiritual-gifts doctrine as an avenue of church nurture and growth. Such experiments would be useful as a means of checking the response that came from the church at Galt. If such checking on a wide range validated the positive effect found here, then one more step toward the finished work would be seen as coming into focus.

APPENDIX A

TIME FLOW OF SECTION TWO REPORT
ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

TIME FLOW OF SECTION TWO REPORT ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS						
	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	Prayer Meeting series on	First Corinthians				
9	Notice in Church Newsletter about	Questionnaire mailed		Questionnaire		
7	Sermons - - -	(11)	(2)(3)(4)	(5)(6)	(2)	(8)
8			First Second - -	Afternoon Seminars		
			Sabbath School Emphases on the Holy Spirit			
1	January	February	March	April	May	June
9	Sermon - -	(2)	Summary Letter to Church	Evaluation Interviews		
7	-	-	Writing of Report			
9						

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO GALT CHURCH

MEMBERS ON JULY 26, 1978

BENNETT QUESTIONNAIRE AU DMIN

I. Introduction

The information I expect to receive from your response to this questionnaire will be very important to me in a project that I am doing. The more objective and honest the answers, the greater will be the value. The responses will be anonymous for you will not be identified. The serial numbers are for other purposes. I will not know your number. Please return all sheets to me in the accompanying envelope. Leave them stapled together. Thank you in advance for giving me this special help. Lester Bennett.

First, would you check all the following items that apply to you:

- ☐ I cannot do this because of ill health.
- ☐ I cannot do this because of not understanding the questions.
- ☐ My age is 25 years or under.
- ☐ My age is between 25 and 60 years.
- ☐ My age is 60 years or older.
- ☐ I have been a Seventh-day Adventist 5 years or less.
- ☐ I have been a Seventh-day Adventist between 5 and 20 years.
- ☐ I have been a Seventh-day Adventist 20 years or more.
- ☐ I attended a SDA school at least 1 year.
- ☐ Most of my education was in a SDA school.

II. Section of agree/disagree statements

Here are 21 statements. There are 5 possible reactions to each one. Read carefully and check the one space that most nearly represents your feeling. Do not try to guess what you think I may want or ask anyone else. I want your honest response to the way you understand the statement. Try to use one side or the other rather than the middle space.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. The doctrine of spiritual gifts is an important Bible doctrine. | () () () () () |
| 2. I know a person whom I believe exhibits a spiritual gift in his/her life. | () () () () () |
| 3. When a pastor does his job well, lay members will not have to take so much responsibility in the church. | () () () () () |
| 4. Spiritual gifts should fill the same place in your church as in those where Paul was. | () () () () () |
| 5. Every member of the church has a responsibility for the health of the church. | () () () () () |
| 6. The only spiritual gift to be found in the SDA church is the gift of prophecy. | () () () () () |

fully agree
mostly agree
not sure
mostly disagree
fully disagree

more

fully agree
mostly agree
not sure
mostly disagree
fully disagree

7. A person's work in the church should be based on what he enjoys most. () () () () ()
8. The teaching of spiritual gifts violates the doctrine of justification by faith. () () () () ()
9. Every church member should be recognized as a minister. () () () () ()
10. When asked to serve in some church task, I consider my spiritual gift as a major factor in making a decision. () () () () ()
11. An important reason for spiritual gifts is to lead Christians to maturity. () () () () ()
12. We should expect that different abilities will cause conflict between members. () () () () ()
13. A spiritual gift in the life of a member is evidence of the Spirit at work. () () () () ()
14. Paul's love chapter (1 Corinthians 13) shows that persons with spiritual gifts will not be loving. () () () () ()
15. As a Christian becomes more conscious of the Holy Spirit in his life, he will become less aware of others in the church. () () () () ()
16. Differences of backgrounds and abilities need not destroy church unity. () () () () ()
17. For the greatest community impact, it would be best for the church to concentrate on just one type of work, with everyone doing that. () () () () ()
18. Christians should seek spiritual gifts for their church. () () () () ()
19. Recognition of spiritual gifts will make church membership less important. () () () () ()
20. It would be good for us to study spiritual gifts, in spite of the problem of tongues. () () () () ()
21. It would be better to have a few skilled persons do the church work rather than trying to have everyone involved. () () () () ()

more

III. Section on statements to evaluate

Each of the following statements is completed by the use of any one of the 5 options listed for it. Please place a number before each option, using the numbers 1-5 in the order in which you see their importance or correctness. You may feel that all are good, but choose the best, second best, and so forth in each case. Put a 1 before the best, 2 before the next best with a 5 before the least appropriate or correct answer. You may think of other choices not listed which you prefer. Do not be concerned about those. Just deal with the 5 listed. Notice an example.

An example:

I think the best animal for a pet is a

- (3) chicken.
- (2) cat.
- (1) dog.
- (5) frog.
- (4) squirrel.

1. Sabbath morning church sermons should deal more with
 - () church standards.
 - () family and marriage.
 - () work of the Holy Spirit.
 - () righteousness by faith.
 - () closing events.
2. The Bible symbol that best illustrates the church is
 - () a woman.
 - () a temple.
 - () a branch.
 - () a lamp.
 - () a body.
3. "Finishing the work" would be helped by
 - () more dependence upon church organization.
 - () less dependence upon church organization.
 - () better training programs.
 - () the function of spiritual gifts.
 - () utilization of new technological tools.
4. The Holy Spirit is
 - () a heavenly influence.
 - () a divine power responsible for church growth.
 - () a divine mystery.
 - () dangerous to talk about in discussion groups.
 - () the power by which God creates.
5. Most important to a nominating committee in choosing officers for the church is consideration of the member's
 - () spiritual gift.
 - () length of time as a church member.
 - () record of tithes and offerings.
 - () experience in that office.
 - () education.

more

6. The greatest need in our local church is for
 - () larger facilities.
 - () understanding spiritual gifts.
 - () better training programs for officers.
 - () more social activities.
 - () a stronger financial support.
7. The baptism of the Holy Spirit means that a person
 - () has received God's acceptance of a dedicated mind.
 - () has been baptized by immersion.
 - () has shown the ability to do miracles.
 - () has spoken in tongues.
 - () has become a member of the church.
8. A spiritual gift is
 - () a natural talent with which one is born.
 - () a supernatural endowment.
 - () a skill developed by training.
 - () a miraculous ability.
 - () a demonstration of Christian service that benefits the church.
9. I may know I have a spiritual gift when
 - () I recognize that my Christian service is serving God's cause.
 - () I have it confirmed by an important dream.
 - () I am able to perform a miracle.
 - () I have fasted and prayed for some experience earnestly wanted.
 - () I am assigned a job by the conference committee.
10. A spiritual gift is most important to
 - () convince the worldling of truth.
 - () help the church body to grow.
 - () serve as a sign to the community.
 - () save the expense of a Christian education.
 - () identify who are the true believers in a church.
11. The seal of God will be placed on those who
 - () express a deep concern for obedience.
 - () fully understand the sequence of closing events.
 - () have committed their will to the Holy Spirit.
 - () are conscious of no longer being sinners.
 - () are faithful Bible students.
12. The gift of tongues means that
 - () God is honored by using people without their conscious understanding.
 - () a person's speech should be controlled by a supernatural influence.
 - () this is a special mark of one's experience.
 - () sometimes God gives supernatural endowments.
 - () the subject of gifts is part of Satan's attack.

end.

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire. Please return it to me as soon as possible in the postage paid envelope. Lester Bennett

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INVITATION TO SPIRITUAL GIFT SEMINAR

619 Myrtle Avenue
Galt, Calif. 95632

September 14, 1978

Dear Friends:

This letter is being sent to a few of the church members. I have made a selection of some of you that are officers or have other responsible positions in the church. I am asking if you will be willing to be involved with me for a few hours.

My doctoral project at Andrews calls for introducing the subject of spiritual gifts into the understanding and operation of a local congregation. This is to be done in several ways. The sermons lately have been part of the background structure for that. So have the prayer meeting studies in First Corinthians.

One of the next things I need to do is to have a block of time for a more concentrated moving into the topic. I had hoped to be able to arrange for a week-end retreat for most of the church. Some possibilities have been explored, but have not materialized as yet. They may later.

But first it is important that I do a pilot seminar with a smaller group. This has two purposes. One is to help me refine the program I have. I have done a similar seminar last spring in Michigan so this one is not totally new. The second goal is to have some from among the church leadership who are acquainted with the subject to the extent that they can serve as helpers in the larger context of the church. It is for this reason that I am writing to you with this special request.

I am scheduling a three hour seminar to be held on Sabbath afternoon, September 23. We will be meeting from 2:30 to 5:30. We will be using a classroom at L. i Academy. This will not be a preaching service. It will be a time for serious study and reflection. You will need to bring your Bible. The format will include some presentation of material on my part, small group activities, and time for seeking personal insights. I believe that you will find it meaningful and a blessing in your Christian growth.

If you will be able to join me for that time, plan to stay for the entire period. If you have children, please arrange for someone else to care for them, as you will need to give your full attention to the work at hand. In case you cannot come, do not feel apologetic. I will be pleased if you can.

Since beginning my study in this area of gifts, I have become convinced that the Seventh-day Adventist church has tended to miss a very important concept of church life and service. This subject is tied in, of course, with the need for a deeper understanding of the place and work of the Holy Spirit. Only as He is allowed to be involved can we expect to see the latter rain. I believe that this program leads in that direction. I trust your experience on the 23rd will confirm that conviction in your heart.

In Christian love,

Lester Bennett
Lester Bennett

APPENDIX D

HANDOUTS USED AT SPIRITUAL GIFT SEMINAR

A PROFILE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1 Cor. 12:1 | 1. The subject of spiritual gifts is to be understood. |
| 1 Cor. 1:7 | 2. The church waiting for the coming of Christ is to come behind in no gift. |
| James 1:17 | 3. Every good gift originates with God. |
| Eph. 4:7, 8 | 4. A personal portion of grace is Christ's gift to all. |
| Romans 12:3 | 5. Even Faith is a gift measured to each. |
| Col. 1:18 | 6. The church is symbolically the body of Christ. |
| 1 Cor. 12:27 | 7. Members of the church function as members of Christ's body. |
| Romans 12:4-5 | 8. Body members have different functions. |
| 1 Cor. 12:25-26 | 9. The church should show unity and mutual care. |
| 1 Cor. 12:13 | 10. By the Holy Spirit all join the body. |
| 1 Cor. 12:11 | 11. The Spirit wills to each his gift. |
| 1 Cor. 12:7-10 | 12. The same Spirit manifests Himself in many ways. |
| 1 Cor. 12:7 | 13. The gifts are for the common good. (RSV, NIV) |
| 1 Cor. 14:26, 12 | 14. All gifts should edify the church. |
| Rom. 12:1 | 15. The Christians body is to be dedicated for God's service. |
| Rom. 12:6-8 | 16. Gifts are to be used. |
| Eph. 4:12 | 17. Some gifts "prepare God's people for works of service." (NIV) |
| Eph. 4:13 | 18. Gifts lead the church to unity of faith and knowledge. |
| Eph. 4: 15, 16 | 19. Gifts lead to Christian growth. |
| 1 Peter 4:10 | 20. Stewardship of God's grace requires gift ministry. |
| 1 Cor. 13:1-3 | 21. Spiritual gifts always operate in the context of love. |

A STUDY ON PAUL'S LISTING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- I. Study the following texts. Under each one list the various gifts that Paul names there.

Romans 12:6-8

I Cor. 12:6-10

I Cor. 12:28

Ephesians 4:11

-
- II. Answer the following questions about the lists.

1. Name any gifts found in all four lists.
2. Name any gifts found in three lists.
3. Do you see where two or more names might suggest the same gift? Which?
4. What significance would you attach to the variety in the lists?
5. Which do you see as the most important for the church today?
(a) (b) (c)
6. Do you see any that are not needed today?
(a) (b) (c)
7. Are there any gifts you would add for today's church list?

THE IDENTIFICATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

"To each is given a manifestation of the Spirit," (1 Cor. 12:7 RSV)

"As each has received a gift, employ it for one another." (1 Peter 4:8 RSV)

I. Respond prayerfully to the following questions.

1. Do you see spiritual gifts as a Bible doctrine? Yes Not sure
2. Do you believe the holy Spirit is guiding your church today? Yes Not sure
3. Do you wish the Holy Spirit to direct in your life? Yes Not sure
4. For what responsibility in your church do you feel best qualified?

5. What need in your church are you most concerned about? _____
6. Is your present church task what you would like to be doing? _____
7. If you had the choice of doing any service in your church activity, what would it be? _____
8. What special ability for God's work do you feel you have? _____
9. In devotional reading, is there a task that you are often impressed you should be doing? What is it? _____
10. Is there a challenge of responsibility you often hear when listening to a sermon? What is it? _____
11. What form of service do other people often tell you that they feel is your special ability? _____
12. In questions 4-11, did you give a similar answer for two or more? _____
What area of service was it? _____
13. When reading Paul's gift lists, was there any gift you seemed to identify with? It was _____. Is that in the same general category as your answer in number 12? _____.

At this point, what do you believe is your spiritual gift(s)?

- II. Share your insight with others in your group and request their evaluation
Names of others who confirmed my gift recognition:

Other gifts which my group suggested for me were:

"The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit. . . . All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised." COL 327

"The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ's service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men." COL 328

"The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God." COL 327

"God's church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts and endowed with the Holy Spirit." AA 12

"Men have varied gifts, and some are better adapted to one branch of the work than another. . . . The work of each in his position is important." GW 482

"God has set in the church different gifts. These are precious in their proper places." GW 481

"Christ's followers have been redeemed for service. Our Lord teaches that the true object of life is ministry." COL 326

"One worker may be a ready speaker; another a ready writer; another may have the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer; another the gift of singing; another may have special power to explain the word of God with clearness. And each gift is to become a power for God because He works with the laborer." 9T 144

"Our Lord designed that His church should reflect to the world the fullness and sufficiency that we find in Him. We are constantly receiving of God's bounty, and by imparting of the same we are to represent to the world the love and beneficence of Christ. . . . We are members of His mystical body." 5 T 731

"Kindly affections, generous impulses, and a quick apprehension of spiritual things are precious talents, and lay their possessor under a weighty responsibility. All are to be used in God's service." COL 352

"If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit." AA 50

"The comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service." AA 49

"Those only who are constantly receiving fresh supplies of grace, will have power proportionate to their daily need and their ability to use that power." AA 55

"The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ." DA 805

A SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

By the mystery of the incarnation, Christ came to earth in a human body.. He came as a servant to minister to mankind. When He returned to heaven, He left the church as the body through which this ministry would continue. It is by the Holy Spirit that this guidance functions.

The method by which the Holy Spirit enables church members to function is termed "spiritual gifts". This requires that the person dedicate himself totally to God by allowing the Spirit to live within as in God's temple. Then the indwelling Spirit, by His omniscient will, provides abilities by which the Christian ministers on behalf of Christ. That ministry may be to meet the needs of other members of the body. Or it may be the outreach of the body to persons who are not Christians, with the purpose of helping them and drawing them to Christ. Genuine spiritual gifts must always operate in the way of Christ's love.. They honor him and do not exalt the member.

A spiritual gift may be a natural inherited talent or a learned skill. It qualifies as a gift by being offered to the direction of the Spirit. Or it may be a special ability supernaturally bestowed by the overruling action of the Holy Spirit. In either case a spiritual gift must be recognized as Spirit controlled and in harmony with divine principles. All Christians have at least one gift and may have several.

Several gifts are listed in the Bible by way of illustration. Some of these are basic to God's work in all ages.. Some may be for specific situations. However the Spirit has infinite possibilities by which He may use one to meet the needs of people in any age or culture.

An understanding of Spiritual gifts can be of help to the Seventh-day Adventist church to recognize that the "finishing of the work" is not by might nor by power (nor by gimmick) but by God's Spirit. Thus the work each does in ministry, like perfection of character through righteousness by faith, is also an operation of faith in Christ.

AN EVALUATION OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS SEMINAR

The goal for this weekend series on Spiritual Gifts was threefold:

1. To acquaint you with the basic Bible passages that speak to this subject.
2. To assist you with an organization of the doctrine of Spiritual Gifts and its place in the Seventh-day Adventist faith.
3. To motivate you to accept personally the concept of Spiritual Gifts for the purpose of your life being more effectively used by the Holy Spirit in the church body and its service to the world.

Please help evaluate the Seminar's effectiveness in reaching the goal by indicating your reaction to the following areas:

(Circle a number. 1=no; 5=yes; 2, 3, and 4 show intermediate values.)

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | a. Were the presentations true to the Bible? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | b. Were the presentations appropriate for Seventh-day Adventists? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | c. Were the lessons clear and understandable? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | d. Was a spiritual tone recognized? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | e. Did you feel an appeal to respond to the teaching? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | f. Will this program strengthen church growth? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | g. The study on the Holy Spirit from Romans 8? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | h. The sermon on the church as body? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | i. The profile on Spiritual Gifts? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | j. The summary statement on gifts? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | k. The exercise on Paul's listing of gifts? |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | l. The challenge on personal identification? |

What about these questions:

1. Were you uncomfortable with any part? Which? Why? _____

2. Are there other points you would have liked included? _____

3. Would you share other useful comments? _____

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE LESSON FROM PRAYER MEETING STUDIES

FIRST CORINTHIANS

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (AA 298) in the spring of 57 AD. (BC 6:103) It was the third of the biblical letters of Paul's writing, coming after 1 and 2 Thessalonians. (Ibid.) However he had already written an earlier letter to Corinth. (1 Cor. 5:9)

It is "one of the richest, most instructive, most powerful of all his letters." (AA 301)

1 Corinthians 1:1-9. Introduction to the letter.

Note that the name of Christ is used nine times in the first nine verses.

1:1 Paul: "Called to be the sent one." (Apostle)
Sosthenes: Is he the same as in Acts 18:17 ?
The amanuensis?

1:2 The church of God.
The sanctified ones. (hagios-separated)
"Called" cf. vs. 1.
"to be saints." (hagios) What are the qualifications?
"together in every place." True catholic church.

1:3-9 The salutation.
"Grace and peace." The twins of Paul's hallmark. See his other epistles.
"Grace was given"
"Enriched in every way"
"Testimony of Christ confirmed"
"Come behind in no gift" (remember for chapter 12)
Adventist orientation.
Assurance of judgment position
The source of these qualities is based upon the faithfulness of God in Christ.
"In the last analysis we cannot argue a man into Christianity; we can only say to him, 'try it and see what happens'." (Barclay 11)

1 Corinthians 1:10;16. Introduction for the reason for the letter.

Theme of the book: church unity
No divisions, perfectly joined. (note for chapter 12 later)
Chloe's family report.

"In this instance, those who were interested in the prosperity of the church at Corinth, and who had seen evils creeping in, had presented the matter before the apostle; and from divine revelations which he had formerly received, he was prepared to judge of the character of these developments." (AA 3C2)
Party loyalty and Paul's baptism practice.

1 Corinthians 1:17-31. Paul's preaching apostleship.

1:17-24 Preaching as power or foolishness.

1:25-28 God and the common man. (Barclay 22)

1:29-31 Reasons to glory in Christ.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE SERMON OUTLINE

Proposition: God confronts people in worship through their intellect.

Transitional Sentence: How God confronts people in worship through their intellect is presented in 1 Corinthians 14.

I. Introduction:

Where is the real you? The question recognized in the matter of organ transplants. The mind is a sacred part for it determines the person.

It has been said that Satan seeks to disrupt our intelligence for that is our "highest and noblest gift." (MM271)

Through our minds we come to know God, to understand and love and serve Him. Therefore with our minds we confront God in worship.

"In this communion is found the highest education." (Ed 14)

II. The value of Intelligent worship is illustrated in the contrast of prophecy and tongues.

(Chapter 14 is the most extended discussion of the tongues gift in the Bible.)

1. The gift of tongues.

What is it? see Acts 2:4, 11 (TEV)

Cf. Acts 10:46; and 19:6.

Is it the same at Corinth? What about NEB?(ecstatic speech)

In either case, the message of 1 Cor. 14 is clear.

Tongues:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. do not speak to others (2) | 2. self edification only (4) |
| 3. require interpreter (5) | 4. is unintelligible (9) |
| 5. mark of a foreigner (10) | 6. mind is unfruitful (14) |
| 7. people cannot respond (16) | 8. sign for unbelievers (22 cf. 21) |
| 9. impression of madness (24) | 10. interpret or be quiet (28) |

2. Prophecy:

May include exhortation. Included in all four gift lists.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. especially desirable (1) | 2. speaks to men (3) |
| 3. desirable results (3) | 4. edifies the church (4) |
| 5. the greater gift (5) | 6. "2000 times" more (19) |
| 7. mature thinking (20) | 8. for believers (22) |
| 9. convicts outsiders (24,25) | 10. under control (32 TEV) |

III. The purpose of intelligent worship is to bring edification.

The goal of worship is to build up the church. (2, 5)

1. The quality of the members is to be built. (26)

2. The quantity of the members is to be built. (24, 25)

IV. The manner of intelligent worship is to be seen in orderliness.

The God of order is illustrated by design in nature.

The services are to be structured and orderly. (26-33, 40)
(GV 289)

V. Conclusion. CT 361

APPENDIX G

LETTER TO GALT CHURCH MEMBERS IN FEBRUARY 1979

February 1979

Dear Members of the Galt Seventh-day Adventist church:

I am writing to share with you again in the area of spiritual gifts. As most of you know this is the concentration I have been working on for my project with Andrews University. I have appreciated your kindness and encouragement in this as well as your patience in letting me continue to remind you of it in so many ways.

At this point I would like to summarize with you that which I have attempted to cover during the last eight months. I have purposely tried not to make spiritual gifts the "only thing" that is happening. I want to keep it in perspective with the total church program. However, one aspect of spiritual gifts that is significant and which many other local churches are also studying, is that it is a part of the church growth emphasis that the conference is presently encouraging. In fact, I have been invited to conduct a gift seminar at Cloverdale on March 23 and 24.

One key factor of a pastor's work is the preaching assignment. So naturally I have included much of the gift concept in my sermons. Let me review those.

August 19	"Walking with the Spirit" (Romans 8).
September 2	"The Baptized Body" (The church as a continuation of Christ's incarnate ministry).
September 9	"Looking for the Spirit-filled Person" (A study in the Book of Acts on early church examples).
September 16	"Everybody Needs a Body" (1 Corinthians 12, on the plan for unity and diversity in the church body).
October 7	"Call to Intelligent Worship" (1 Corinthians 14, contrasting the gift of tongues and proclamation).
October 14	"The More Excellent Way" (1 Corinthians 13, all gifts must function on the basis of love).
November 18	"Designing a Quality Church" (Ephesians 4, a study of the place of spiritual gifts as the basis of ministry for church growth).
December 30	"Your Mission for Seventy-nine" (This was the overhead projector review of several points of spiritual gifts which were listed on the yellow hand out. We ended with a dedication service).
February 10	"Ministering God's Grace" (1 Peter 4:7-11, a list of five areas of ministering God's grace).

The prayer meeting series on First Corinthians ran from July 5 to October 16, 1978. Those who were there received the outline each week. (I may have a few left if some are wanting them for reference.) Since it was to Corinth that Paul spoke most fully on spiritual gifts, this background seems important to our understanding. We kept in mind as a reference point that our church is like Corinth in two ways. (1) We are a church waiting for the coming of Christ, i.e., an Adventist people, and (2) we are to "come behind in no gift," including the testimony of Jesus (see 1 Cor. 1:6-8). The three key gift chapters, 12, 13, 14, were not covered in the prayer meeting series as these were used in the Sabbath morning sermons.

A third presentation came in the three-hour Sabbath afternoon seminars last fall at Lodi Academy. About fifty of you were involved in one of these two sessions. Most of you who attended indicated that the awareness gained was important to you. We can have another local seminar later this spring if there is an interest in those who did not attend earlier.

One of the assignments at the seminar was to note gift recognition in others of the church members. This was passed on to the nominating committee to supplement their own attempts at the same assignment. I felt that they made a genuine attempt to be aware of member's spiritual abilities in selecting officers, rather than just filling a slot with a name.

As an encouragement for you to review the doctrine of spiritual gifts, may I remind you of some of the key Bible sections to study.

1. Romans 8 A commentary of the Christian life as a partnership with the Holy Spirit.
2. Romans 12 A call to give our bodies in service by whatever gift we may have.
3. 1 Corinthians 12 Here the church is compared to the human body. Each member is unique and functions in unity for the health of the whole. This chapter has two suggestive lists of gifts.
4. Ephesians 4 The gifts Christ left for the church were to develop the church for the work of ministry. As a result the church will grow into the fulness of the stature of Christ.
5. 1 Peter 4 Gifts are to be used to minister the grace of God and for the glory of Christ.
6. 1 Corinthians 14 A warning against the misuse of gifts is illustrated by a contrast of tongues and proclamation. All things are to be done decently and in order.
7. 1 Corinthians 13 Gifts must operate in a context of love.

In my expressions about spiritual gifts, I have tried to always relate this doctrine to an awareness of the Holy Spirit. As we look forward to the "finishing of the work" in the setting of the latter rain, we anticipate that the deep dedication of God's people will be in the form of an opening of their lives to the Holy Spirit's guidance. He will then accomplish His work by the consecrated abilities and talents of those people. For it is when the natural talents or special abilities given, are available for God's service that these become in the real sense a spiritual gift. Gifts, we must remember, are not for the honor of the person who is gifted. That was the problem at Corinth. But they are to be lovingly ministered to others under the example of Christ's life and on His behalf. These were some of the special emphases that were discussed in the Sabbath School classes during the fourth quarter of 1978.

But perhaps the most important concern in the doctrine is not in its definition or understanding. The real test is the practice. I have been pleased that several of you have shared with me your own search of awareness of special convictions you have as to where the Holy Spirit is placing you. You have recognized that your ministry is something special and does not have to be a copy of what others are doing. Also some of you have seen rather common tasks take on new meaning because these are now looked upon as a service ordained of heaven through which God may touch

another person. This experience meets the real goal of what I hope to do.

During the next several weeks I want to continue these personal visits where we can explore together what the Spirit may be saying. If this church becomes a congregation where many individuals are conscious of the Holy Spirit at work in the life and directing in a loving ministry to others in the church and to those outside, then I will feel that the project on spiritual gifts has indeed been successful.

I have just finished reading the new two volume compilation from Ellen White titled Mind, Character and Personality. Let me share a few statements from there that speak to the doctrine of gifts..

"The Spirit of God, received into the soul, quickens all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God." p. 11.

"It is only when brought under the full control of the Spirit of God that the talents of an individual are rendered useful to the fullest extent." p. 16.

"When you yield your will to His, (Christ's) He immediately takes possession of you and works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Your nature is brought under the control of His Spirit." p. 123.

"Knowledge, (If sought from principle). . . will help you to bring into exercise the powers which God has given you and to employ them in His service." p. 310.

"It is the Lord's plan that there shall be unity in diversity. . . . Our varied trusts are proportioned to our varied capabilities." p. 423.

"To everyone God has entrusted talents. These talents we are to use to help one another to walk in the narrow path." p. 431.

"Those who are truly connected with Him cannot be at variance with one another. His Spirit ruling in the heart will create harmony, love, and unity." p. 497.

"By living to minister for others, man is brought into connection with Christ." p. 566.

"Social advantages are talents." p. 621.

"The gifts of God are to be used for the saving of souls." p. 628.

"We are to cultivate the talents given us by God. They are His gifts and are to be used in their right relation to each other so as to make a perfect whole." p. 800.

Thank you for being a minister of God's gifts.

Sincerely, your brother,

Lester Bennett

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW OUTLINE USED FOR MEMBER

INTERVIEW RESPONSE

CHURCH MEMBER'S RESPONSE TO THE SPIRITUAL GIFT EMPHASIS

Name	Date
<p>1. Which of the following responses most closely marks your reaction to the spiritual gift emphasis in the Galt church during recent months?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I was not aware of a special emphasis.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I felt that the emphasis was not important.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have gained an understanding of the doctrine of spiritual gifts.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I not only believe the doctrine of spiritual gifts, but am sincerely trying to identify an area of gift ministry in my life.</p>	
<p>2. What Bible teachings on spiritual gifts can you recall? (state in your own words and/or give Bible chapters that are important about gifts.)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>3. What difference does the understanding of spiritual gifts make in your life and work as a Christian?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>4. What difference do you see that an acceptance of spiritual gifts by most members of your church would make in the mission of that church?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>5. Which of the spiritual gift presentations was most helpful to you?</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>6. What do you see as your spiritual gift (s)?</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>7. With whom have you shared this conviction?</p> <p>What confirmation have you had?</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>8. What future steps should be taken in your church to continue or expand the emphasis on spiritual gifts?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

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